



In
The Lap
of the
Lammer-
moors

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In the Lap of the Lammermoors



In the Lap of The Lammermoors

BY

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*THROUGH WHOM HEAVEN REVEALED
A LARGER LOVE IN LIFE,*

This Book

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

P R E F A C E.

IT is an old truism, but one worth repeating, that Heaven's best gift to the human soul is not the power to see the distant more clearly, but that which lies closest to the feet. Nature herself constantly works to impress this truth upon man. She is the devoted servant of every one who approaches her with reverence and love, revealing out of her treasures things new as well as old to the seeking heart in the ordinary work-a-day world and among familiar places. However often we follow the old paths, they have always something to show which the eye never saw before. The field is the world in more senses than one.

If life be touched on at many points in these pages, it is partly because Nature and life cast a mutual light upon each other. There is a common thought in both, a common sympathy between them. It is through the one that we get the proper

aspect and atmosphere for understanding the other. Personal experiences are mutual and interchangeable like Nature and life themselves; those of one to-day may be another's to-morrow. It is for this reason that the personal element so far as it appears in the book is given without apology. Then life in the deepest places of its experience casts a strong light upon Nature; as they have common depths so they have a common gift of tongues.

The scenes that have sought expression have woven themselves about the heart—the secret of the past sleeping in the tumulus, the mystery of the rounded hills, the light on the mountain stream, the cloud slowly drifting over wide expanses of summer sky, beast and bird and insect rejoicing each in its own life. To the author himself the study of these things has been a lifelong joy. They have fallen on responsive chords within him, and produced on his own inner ear the effect of a heavenly music. Apart from the thought of the reader altogether, they have brought enlargement and strength to his own soul. If the printed word should carry but a small portion of the thought and the feeling which were the product of his own love for Nature and constant contact with her in sunshine and storm, the book will have served an almost selfish purpose by increasing a joy which was lighted first at Nature's own flame.

Many of these papers have already appeared in ‘The Scotsman,’ and to the proprietors for permission to reprint them, and to the editor for his kindly encouragement, acknowledgment is gratefully given. The title of the book is due to a friend whose name is well known in the literary world, and with whom the writer shares many happy memories of pleasant walks in the remotest parts of the Lammermoors and underneath every kind of sky.

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IN THE LAP OF THE LAMMERMOORS.

A BORDER PARISH.

ITS size and position make the parish abut upon three different counties—Haddington, Mid-Lothian, and Roxburgh. From one point of its boundary a step carries the foot from its own county of Berwick into that of Edinburgh on the one hand and of Roxburgh on the other. Its greatest length runs about eleven miles north and south, and in breadth it varies from three to seven, but so irregular and winding is the outline that a good walker would take almost two days to go round its marches. An extensive Dale, enclosed among hills that reach for miles on its north side and are penetrated by several wild and lonely glens with wide, rolling moors between them, practically exhaust its surface. From such a general description

it will be easy to understand that the parish is pastoral rather than agricultural. Rich crops of grain grow on fertile haugh and upland along the river, but his flocks are the farmer's mainstay. The whole country-side is dotted with thousands of sheep, from the larger cross-bred kind that thrive best on the lush grazing of lowland fields, to those of the Cheviot breed on the higher pasture, and the hardy blackfaced mountain race on the hills and moors. You can never get away from them in any part of it, just as you can never get away from the rush and splash of mountain brooks. It is a place of bleating sheep and murmuring streams. One or two other touches will give the outline of its most salient features. As it is the largest in extent, so it is perhaps the richest in antiquarian remains and historic lore of its county. That it is unusually interesting as a centre of abundant and varied wild life, these pages, if they do not constantly show, will largely fail of their purpose.

Every part of a country follows generally the lines of its underlying rock. As the body fits itself to the framework of bone beneath, so does the earth to that more solid groundwork on which its surface rests. Among the Lammermoors the Silurian or gray-waucke formation has produced rounded hill and deep, winding, pastoral valley, peculiarly tender and restful in their appearance and outline, but entirely devoid of the rugged grandeur and wild magnificence which are found with some other rocks.

From scaur and quarry this Silurian rock pushes forth its flinty ribs. Their consistent iron-like front gives little if any trace of primeval life. Along one or two of the mountain streams attempts have been made to use it for roofing-slate. Considerable heaps of rubble reveal traces of operations which had been carried on for some time, but with little apparent success. The stone was not of a quality to warrant the trouble and expense of working it, and by one of the quarries lies a large heap of dressed slates which have never been carted away. Even less successful were some attempts to find copper in the graywaucke stone, if one may judge from the old workings which are still visible, and which have come down from an indefinite past.

The whole of the eastern Border country was once shaken by strong volcanic forces. Along parts of the rocky coast they have thrown up at places cliffs hundreds of feet in height, and farther inland strange and well-defined hills covered with stones like scoriæ have risen under their influence. These are easily recognised among the other hills, towering directly from the low country alone or in a little group as the Eildons have done. Rising so suddenly and without any apparent explanation, the popular mind has sought to find one in supernatural agency. Though their effects are not so marked in it, the parish has not escaped from the action of these widespread forces which in some forgotten day made the tortured earth rise into hill or sink into depth as

winds do the surface of the sea. Parts of it have been shaken to their very foundations. Contorted rocks have preserved the story in stone of these distant agonies of the earth, and one hill in the north-east, though little distinguished from those around it, has been built up by volcanic agency.

Still another rock—the Old Red Sandstone—once overlay the earlier graywaucke on hill and in dale. Largely built up of it in their higher reaches, the Lammermoors formed mountain heights then much grander and more impressive than they are now, and the glens that penetrate them were much deeper. But the slow ages, during which this formation gathered at the bottom of some primeval sea, were succeeded by ages when Nature reversed her own work. The sea became dry land again, and the later sandstone, under the wear and tear of the years, almost disappeared. The hills lost their high soaring peaks and impressive ruggedness, to sink back to the hard foundation core of graywaucke with its lower heights and softly rounded slopes. What has been left of the Old Red shows as a firm conglomerate stone yielding slowly to the constant action of some of our streams. Under its influence, too, the upland fields are ruddy where the ploughshare has torn them, and turn a rich rosy-red in the evening sunshine. Among fresh green of meadows and rapidly leafing woods in early summer, they increase the picturesque contrasts and general beauty of the landscape. Along the hillsides where there have

been landslides, many of the gravelly precipices are of the same hue. With the exception of these scanty fragments of a great formation, the red sandstone has been planed down by ice, wasted and weathered by storms, and worn away by the constant action of running water. Yet for all the wasting of the years, not only on ploughed field but in certain lights—most of all those of evening—from heath-clad moor and green meadow the underlying red soil makes its presence felt. The earth appears to blush through it with all the delicacy of the fair bloom on beauty's cheek.

What gives the parish a distinctive character and beauty of its own is the river. Along the Dale it flows in a southerly direction, gathering the tribute of many streams. Its course is through a rich and ever-changing country, with a constant succession of most pleasing scenes. The affluents on the right bank, coming from the west, are very much shorter and smaller in size. The upland from which they flow is lower, though even here at one point it rises to upwards of twelve hundred feet. On the other bank the tributaries of the main stream reach six or seven miles at least into the range of the Lammermoors, flowing along quiet, sequestered glens. The Dale itself is in the middle of a well-watered country. Largely open in its upper reaches, the valley lower down has been more extensively planted, and possesses all the charm of the finest sylvan scenery. Its fertile

holms or haughs are a special feature, and have received their meed of praise in song.

Past one holm after another the river glides from pool to pool, now glancing in the sunshine, now disappearing among the deep shadows cast by the greenery of overhanging woods. Along its banks large fields of golden grain ripen every harvest, but towards its sources it is mostly pastoral. Ridges and elevated spurs from the hilly country behind reach down into the Dale. Many of these are crossed by undulating roads which give extensive and delightful prospects over a wide country. Like the ancient camps which were occupied so long before them, several of our country homesteads have been built where they can command a magnificent reach of landscape. The garden is frequently part of an upland terrace overlooking a broad sweep of valley, river, moor, and hill. Extending far beyond the Dale itself to mountains dim and hazy in the distance, covering a large stretch of the fair and diversified Borderland, these prospects are above all price to a mind and soul in sympathy with Nature. Though the roads to them are steep and difficult, and the storms of winter blow with a fierceness which is unknown in more sheltered places, life among them should be cleaner, sweeter, and stronger, as well as happier, than anywhere else. In spite of that blindness and lack of appreciation which cast a concealing veil over what we see every day, and take the edge

from the charm of the finest scenery, these prospects must always impress the heart. We are justly proud of them; our wide prospects are a lasting portion of the wealth of the parish. Beautiful at any season, they reach their most impressive effect under the soft, hazy lights of the autumn sunshine, when the river sings its way, among brooding stillness, through fields of grain whitening to harvest, or newly-cut sheaves, and between woods soft and tender with the spreading hues of hastening decay.

From the valley the parish appears to end with the undulating skyline of the nearer heights on its northern side. Beyond these, however, lies the larger part of it. As soon as the upland has been surmounted, a wide region opens to the eye, of entirely different character from that left behind—a lofty tableland of brown heath and benty grasses. Drawn on by the mystery and the spell of the hills, you may wander for days without meeting anyone save a solitary shepherd pursuing his peaceful avocation. A vast extent of moorland, rising at places into a rounded height hardly more than a mound on the upper moors, culminates in one hill nearly seventeen hundred feet high. Their name expresses their character. They are Lammermoors, higher moors rather than hills. It is the expanse of moorland which appeals to the mind and impresses the thoughts. A land of blackfaced sheep and hill-birds,—a sheltering hollow with a shepherd's

home to break, rather to give human expression to, the solitude. Lonely and yet fascinating, with the murmur of the stream in the glens below, the note of the breeze as it rustles the heather, and the whisper of the hills. A world with large horizons for the spirit as well as for the sight; a place where the thoughts reach into the depths of life as the eyes travel to the blue hills in the distance; a world where to be alone is to realise the deeper reaches of being, to get new powers of vision on a side where hearing and sight merge in a common spiritual sense. The far-spreading moors, like the sky over them, suggest immensity to the thoughts. Perhaps wide, open moorlands, unbroken by hedge or tree, are more suggestive of immense spaces than anything. Not only immensity but a solitude which can be felt. Over them the wind blows sweet and clean, straight from heaven. The moors are the roof of our world. They give a higher and truer perspective through which to see it. With all the charm of the Dale, secluded and remote from busier scenes of life, the parish would be infinitely poorer without its wild, lonely moors. Man cannot live by bread alone, and they have a wealth entirely apart from red grouse and feeding sheep. There is a tremendous reserve about them which the thoughts can hardly penetrate, much less exhaust,—a brooding mystery like that of the mist which so often enfolds them. As the sea they are full of infinite possibilities, and keep life fresh and youth-

ful with the consciousness of something new and marvellous. As old as the hills does not give the mind the truest conception of them, for with them are the deep secrets of eternal youth. New life flows from their secret depths as the streams from their hidden sources. From them come strength, health, and youth still. As the eye travels from them more widely over the visible world, so does the soul in larger measure open to that which is unseen. Not only this, but moorland and hill fresh from the hand of Nature give one truer thoughts of the country about them ; they supply both aspect and atmosphere. Seen through them, the Dale and the fields with the scattered homes of men appear in a higher setting, and under a clearer and whiter light. No one really knows the parish until he has climbed to these upland heights, and had their Pisgah vision, and entered into possession of it by the way of the hills.

THE GOLDEN GLEN.

BEAUTIFUL gorse blossom, rich with the glowing hues of the sunshine, gave the glen this name. That was years ago, before the prickly covers were ruined, largely by the thoughtlessness of youth. The boys of the place, regardless of threatened penalties, could never resist the temptation of setting them ablaze, to watch the crackling flames racing up the hillside, and the glen filling with volumes of smoke. There was a fascination for them in the very magnitude of the destruction, and they shouted and danced for glee, active, dark figures against the ruddy fires. Burnt in this remorseless way, the ground itself was scorched, and it took years to repair the ruin of a night. The birds lost one of their finest shelters, and the gold of the gorse flower was sadly tarnished. Yet the old name still keeps its significance. Townsfolk and visitors to the town throng its quiet paths in sunny afternoons and the long twilight of summer nights. In hours of leisure the footsteps of the community turn naturally to it, for everyone loves the glen. There the lover comes to pour his

ancient tale into sympathetic ears to the rippling murmur of the stream, as others whisper it under cover of strains of sweet music. Laughing children love to wade in the crystal pools and catch the minnows that glide and dart in shoals; sedate old age seeks the seats to enjoy the sunshine and muse pensively on the days that are gone,—the babble and laughter of the children bring back their own vanished youth. In far-away lands are many who remember the glen with the purer affection we give to that which is no longer seen, and through whose dreams of home the wimpling burn has never ceased to glide, threading together the glistening pearls of the past. So the name never ceases to be appropriate. The sheets of gold that shone with brilliant colour in the day-time, and through the night covered the slopes with a rich afterglow when the gorse flower bloomed, belong to other days; only a few bushes are left to give a faint idea of past splendour, but richer ore lies hid in the glen for those who seek it. Gold of health, gold of quiet and happy hours, gold of memories that brighten the grey days of life,—where shall one find richer ore than this? To those who know its quiet beauty and its peaceful charm, the place will always be the golden glen.

There are human faces that the fret and bustle of life hardly touch. An atmosphere of peace surrounds them like the fragrance of a flower, and even in the crowd a spirit of restfulness radiates from

them to all about. This rare character of a face is the natural character of the glen. People come and go in numbers, yet hardly disturb its placidity. The remoteness, the loneliness, the native wildness, continue to assert themselves, and almost overpower the intrusion of human life; even in the company of others you are conscious of this absorbing and isolating influence of the glen. That may be the reason why so many birds that love unfrequented parts of the country come here so close to the town. Sitting by the door, I have heard some of them singing quite near the ancient mill, now shorn of most of its glory, but once an important centre in the life of the community. There they brought the sheaves from the neighbouring "acres" to be made into food, and his multures made the miller a man of substance. Close to the mill the reed-sparrow ching-chings most of the day, and continues his song far into the twilight. The whinchat, another late singer, perches on one of the topmost sprays of some bush, or on a strong weed near the stream, repeating his feeble notes until the eye can hardly detect him for the failing light. Their songs lack sweetness and power, but they blend with the scene and enhance its effect. Deep in one of the bushes a pair of whitethroats build their nest, which is rarely found, though alongside the path. Sedge-warblers come, and from a thick hedge the male bird babbles night and day snatches of other birds'

songs. Both wagtails—the grey and the pied—are found along the stream, and wheatears nest among the stones farther up the glen. Somewhere in it you are pretty sure to hear the first cuckoo.

Before the thick covert was burnt, a number of foxes haunted the glen. All day long they lay concealed among the impenetrable bushes, though they were occasionally seen sunning themselves in an opener part. They preyed on the large fat rabbits which, time out of mind, have been so numerous, adding a stray fowl on opportunity from one of the nearer farm-steadings. In spring from the outskirts of the town the dog-fox could be heard barking to the vixen. The first year of our occupancy of the house that looks down into the glen, a fox had a path through the park in front, and his footmarks were well defined in the snow. But within a few years their numbers have greatly decreased. The gamekeeper has an instinctive aversion to foxes for the amount of game they destroy. He may exaggerate this destruction on the principle of the dog with the bad name, but that is nothing. Going quietly on his rounds at every hour of the day, sooner or later he comes on Reynard at a disadvantage, and gives him a charge of shot. Nothing is said about it,—for in a fox-hunting country he has committed the unpardonable sin,—but there is a fox less. Another serious drain on their numbers is due to the sale of cubs. An earth is discovered somewhere in the

woods or on the hills, and the gamekeeper, or it may be the shepherd, with a spade digs out the young foxes. They always command a ready market for fox-hunting counties across the Border, so they mean money to him—generally ten shillings apiece. But it is fair to say that in many places this wholesale destruction of foxes by the gamekeeper has largely if not entirely ceased, through a better understanding and more friendly arrangements between him and the leading members of the hunt. He is encouraged and rewarded for protecting them, so far as he can compatibly with the protection of his own game.

The burning of the cover, more than anything, has sent foxes away from the glen. Still one or two visit and make it part of their hunting-ground. Last winter in the sheep pasture crowning one slope, the remains of a long-eared owl were strewed over an old turf road. The head lay by itself in one place, and parts of the rest of the bird—a leg or a wing—in another. There was no difficulty in guessing the author of the destruction; but how such a sharp-eyed bird had allowed himself to be surprised even by the cunning of a fox was more of a problem. From the quantity of torn remains, the owl had proved a tough morsel for Reynard's appetite. About the same time a more uncommon visitor came to the glen. The gamekeeper, going the round of his traps, found one or two of his rabbits devoured by some creature. From the way

in which it was done, he knew that a badger was the cause. Had there been any doubt, the peculiar trail on a scanty covering of snow would have dispelled it at once. It is probable that we have several of these interesting animals about, but their nocturnal habits make them less often noticed. Out of one hole, at least, in the vicinity a shepherd dug three badgers, two of them fine dogs. From the glen you can see a wood covering the hillside on the opposite side of the river, where badgers are often found. Quite lately the gamekeeper who watches this ground took me to see their "set" near the top of a steep ridge, deep in the shadow of the wood. A pair were, to all appearance, rearing their young in it. At the main entrance—there were two—we found the black-and-white bristles of the badger in an enormous heap of red earth and stones which the creatures had excavated. Strong tree roots made the position practically impregnable, and in two or three weeks the entrances to the "set" would be perfectly concealed in a high growth of bracken. At several other places the badgers had begun to burrow, and in each case there was a large quantity of earth near the hole. We looked for their peculiar scratchings on the trees around, but were unable to find them, though the gamekeeper remembered seeing some scratchings on one tree earlier in the season. Near the badger's "set" was a fox's earth, with a strong, rank smell. We expected to have

seen the cubs playing before it in the evening sunshine, but the mother had newly removed them to another earth. The place was quiet and wild, and the keeper took such an interest in them that he was far more anxious to protect than do the badgers any harm. All credit to those who, like him, seek to preserve such an interesting branch of our country's fauna. Perhaps the day may come when legislation will realise a higher duty to creatures of the kind, and people generally take a deeper pride in what ought to be a valuable national possession. Meantime, every real lover of Nature laments the widespread apathy towards the whole question, and the thoughtless way in which the rarer fauna of the country—be it bird or beast—are ruthlessly sacrificed. In the solitude of the wood it seemed natural to meet with the badger, but it was a surprise to find one coming so close to the town as the glen. It is just possible another pair may have their "set" somewhere near.

Everywhere Nature dislikes a vacuum ; she cannot abide the thought of wasted space. The destruction of life in one form opens the way for its appearance in another. The vegetable world constantly exhibits this law in action. Where woods have been blown down, new plants at once rush up,—raspberry, with other bushes and wild flowers, whose seeds have lain in the ground for an unknown time. The earth must be a marvellous treasury of dormant germs of life, each kind waiting through years, it may be

through centuries, until the conditions favourable to its active existence appear. There is an infinite patience about the processes of Nature, in striking contrast with the hurry and fret of human life. In some places where storm has destroyed our woods, rose bay willow-herb—a plant unknown elsewhere in the vicinity—has produced an enormous growth. Among the fallen trees of one wood this flower spread so rapidly that within a few years it has covered acres. Leaving a narrow pathway, one has difficulty in making a way through the high pyramidal stems. What an indescribable show of blossom it presents in later summer; you can see it from the road, almost a mile away, gleaming through the standing trees. Close at hand there is no depicting it, the deep-pink expanse—richer than heather bloom—ever changing with the play of light and shadow upon it, but everywhere the same delicious, underlying hue.

Nature produces some of her finest effects with large masses of colouring. She keeps a delicate brush for individual tinting, covering leaf and petal with ever-varying lines and spots which are always beautiful. Their loveliness appeals to the spirit, so that each wild flower is a joy in itself. But repeated over wider areas, the impression gains more weight. Each one is lost in the mass, and yet adds to the force of the full effect. Foxgloves repeated in this way, spire behind spire, produced a feeling of restfulness in the heart, and increased its sense of the

beautiful. It is restful to look on the individual multiplied to form a crowd, whether it be of living creatures or unconscious plants. The thoughts expand, and from the consequent feeling comes a pleasant sense of rest. Of course, mass has its limits, but within these, expansiveness in Nature, reproducing itself in expansiveness of thought, has a soothing influence on the mind. The willow-herb produced the same effect, only in a greater measure; so did myriads of wild hyacinths purpling the slopes of another wood. In these masses of colouring the mind luxuriated, and the thoughts sank softly into them. There was a sense of freedom which made a pleasant, because restful, change from continual concentration on individual things.

A little tributary babbles on its way from the upland on the right. Most of these hill streams are as noisy and light-hearted as a happy child. But follow the tributary a short way up to the place where it leaps and bounds from the high ground in a series of rapids rather than a cascade, falling from ledge to ledge of rock, making a pretence of boiling and swirling round the large boulders in its bed, by way of keeping the name of Rocky Linn, which has been given it from ridicule. One has only to see it to know that we have no real linns anywhere around. Nothing grand, nothing sublime in any sense, unless in flood, the stream is so small; yet here you will feel away from all the world, and the falling water, with its pleasing dash and mur-

mur, act as a healthy lullaby to the tired and restless mind.

On both sides the ground rises and shuts out everything but the bushes, the wild plants, the rushing stream, and the cloud-drift overhead. Bright yellow flowers of rock-rose glow from the slopes, and fragrant thyme scents the air. With its whorl of leaf, woodruff covers the rocks on the other side, stitchwort hangs its graceful white stars over the miniature rocky precipices, and the thickets are bright with purple cranesbill. Dog and burnet roses flower in summer, the petals of the prickly burnet perfect in their pure and waxy whiteness. Quite a large herbarium might be made from the plants by the Rocky Linn.

But the rush of the falling water will presently absorb and fill the thoughts. Seated on this soft, sloping bank, you cannot help listening. How fast an hour glides away, fast as the rushing stream; you are so much outside time, so absorbed in the eternal present, that minutes and hours have no place in the mind. Outside life with all its cares as well; this is the true palace of dreams and happy visions. The glen and the noisy burn put everything in a fresh perspective. A truer one surely, for its plashing sound carries a new harmony into life. Looking at things through the light of Nature, you have a vision of reality such as the ordinary workaday world does not give. What are all the noise and the fret, all the jealousies and

the bickerings, all the place-hunting and the money-grubbing that creep into the life of the smallest community, beside this murmuring brook? The stream puts the stamp of vanity upon them. Here realities are about you on every side; you are close to the bedrock of things.

By the noisy water, however, you will not only see the vision that enlightens and strengthens, but hear the voice that calls you back again to life. Obey your voice and do your duty; the night cometh when no man can work. In large type, sacrifice and not selfishness is printed all over Nature. This has been your hour; let the next be your fellow-man's. The stream as you follow it down the hill will prattle of the things which you have seen. Every deep thought is a vision; it does not originate in your own mind. These thoughts are floating all around us, filling the air, and using our minds as channels of expression; but outside of us is a vast universe of thought which no human vision has ever seen.

DRIFTING MIST.

FOR almost a week any thought of getting far into the hills was quite hopeless. The mist lay thick on them every morning, hiding their rounded summits, creeping down their sides, and filling the glens. A bare slope peering through, here and there, was all that could be seen. The Dale had lost its horizons, and we lived for the time in a very contracted world, more contracted still when a breeze carried part of the fog-bank down from the uplands. One day it took the form of a lurid haze, through which the pine woods, dark at any time, looked darker and almost forbidding. These foggy days coincided with the passage of the earth through the tail of Halley's comet, and some people were beginning to see in them a connection as well as a coincidence.

But a morning came when the mist melted rapidly beneath the sunbeams. The hills stood out more fresh and green for the close and warm weather of those days of thick fog. The white shroud that had covered it day by day, now that it was removed, made the blue sky look bluer than ever. The air

was cleared of every impurity. Anxious spirits might breathe more freely ; we were safely into clear space again. If the comet had had any perceptible influence on the earth through its atmosphere, that influence had but resulted in a large increase of life and growth. Soon as the fog lifted from the hills, and the heavens fresh from their moist, close mantle as from a bath opened a great blue eye intenser than the blue of the veronica flower, we found ourselves in the middle of summer.

It was just such a morning as tempted one to the hills with their heat-tempering breezes. An opportunity so favourable might not come for some time again, and so, in spite of the weather report that fog might be looked for locally, I started early for them. Some pleasant duty-visits by the way to give the leisured hours among them more zest, and by-and-by we were driving along a glen to a point several miles from home. The stream glanced in the sunshine, hill-birds called on every side, a ring-ouzel sang its wild, breezy song, without the melody of the blackbird's voice, and yet, for all its wildness, as delightful in its way as the sharp, pungent flavour of some uncultivated fruit. Wheatears called from fence and wall, or flew into the air to sing. As handsome a bird for his size as you will see anywhere is the male wheatear, and we have enough of them among our hills to satisfy anyone. Dainty little blackfaced lambs leapt and raced each other along the sward by the road. One might almost

forget beside them that the golden age had passed away. These lambs were in the first flush of joyous life, where their cousins in the lower fields had grown staid and old. The heart expands eagerly to such glad moments as the flower opens to the sunshine, it gathers them almost greedily to itself, with more than a miser's zest in presence of his heaped-up gold. The very remembrance of them is a golden gleam of sunshine amid the sombre grey of duller days. The hours that they ask are never wasted, nor the time given up to possess them from the bustle and toil of everyday life ever misspent. I shall work better for them when heavy toil demands more staying power, and out of them be better able to comfort and help my fellow-man. Let me have them, if only to possess their memories, as we press the flowers of summer to keep them through hours of winter gloom,—flowers that open again the gates of Eden. There is the glint of the sunshine even on the faded petals: they recall happy hours and pleasant places. So let me gather them, above all among these sunny hills, for memory lifts up and idealises life as well as hope. Precious moments, fraught with brightness and sunny glamour, bearing the heart above the fret and narrow round of the present moment to give it glimpses of larger things.

We are come to the place where we must leave the trap, and breast the steeper track to the upland. Here, by the side of it, is the shepherd's house, the

last one on the road for many a weary mile. Large, substantial, comfortable, the home once of a line of farmers who tilled the land and kept their flocks on the hills around. A halo of romantic story mantles the place, were there time to tell it; but anyone may find it, recorded with vivid power and graphic pen, in one of the Tales of the Borders. I love to read it, if only for the reason that it casts a tenderer light on the character of one high in rank and deep in his nation's counsels, who left behind him a name of dark and evil memory. Under the softening influence of the story one feels more kindly toward him, and would fain hope that the passion and tragedy of his terrible times limned his portrait in blacker hues than it really deserved. It is a hospitable home still, with kindly hearts, and it would be an offence to pass it were the moments more hurried than they are. It is more friendly sometimes to receive than to give, and even in the commonplace breaking of bread there is a communion which binds hearts closely to one another, while it strengthens spirit and body for the road.

Still we were climbing with the pleasant softness of an old bridle-path beneath our feet. Little streams on both sides and typical cleughs; one of these went winding down to a glen like a pathway into fairyland. There was no lack of life anywhere. Some of the larger fritillary butterflies flitted constantly over the heather. They passed and repassed, flying rapidly, more of them than ever I had seen before. Once or

twice an Emperor moth came near, made more attractive and conspicuous by the large ocellated spots on the wings. The joy of the day was in the golden plover's note. No bird's cries suggest so much loneliness and remoteness, but all such feelings were strained out of them by the sunshine. It was their nesting-time, and twice the sitting bird rose from my very feet. A moment to admire her spotted and marbled treasures—hiding their mystery of incipient life—in a little hollow among *Vaccinium*, bent grass, and heather; then over the moorland. Three different notes of the golden plover came from every side: one bird called Pui! Pui! Pui! sweetly; another Pui-uie-oo! another still, Purree! Purree! Purree! and many were calling at once. There must be thousands of them on the moors around in early summer. The golden back and the dark, velvety breast of the male were perfectly lovely. The curlew made a clamour of his own, wild and piercing, and from the air over every grassy spot the lark's happy notes fell in showers of melody.

The bridle-path held to the left, but our course lay through rushy marsh and heather to a hill on the right. There was no road now, nothing but the broad moor with the narrow tracks followed by sheep. Here we were in a hollow, there again over a long slope to the height, and down beyond it to a mossy stream. More life along the banks of it than perhaps anywhere, as in the case of the low-

land river. The wild creatures of the moor gather to it from every side. Water is the symbol as well as the real support of life among the solitudes of the hills as much as in other places. Near the stream two red grouse rose reluctantly from the heather. At a nearer approach a number of prettily mottled young, almost as large as chickens, sought cover on every side,—they should be strong on the wing by the Twelfth. A wild duck flew down the hollow: though it loves the neighbourhood of water, its nest is in a dry place, often some distance away. The young ducklings take some days to reach the stream, and are healthier away from it for a little time. Several blue Alpine hares climbed the gentle slope: they, too, had been down to the stream. At this height they are practically the only kind: the common brown hare loves the neighbourhood of meadow and field. Within the past thirty years they have increased enormously on our hills, and promise to be almost as numerous as they are further north. On one hill I counted fifteen within sight at once, and the holes where they burrow in rabbit fashion were tunnelled into the hillside. They are said to have driven the brown hare almost entirely from these uplands. Yet forty or fifty years ago they were not to be found on the Lammermoors. The aged gamekeeper, my friend and confidant in such matters, recalls the day when the Alpine hare was unknown. He remembered an albino hare of the

common kind which was regarded at the time as a great curiosity, but no one had seen a mountain one in its blue or its wintry coat. They came from the hills farther east, and multiplied every year, until they have reached the numbers of to-day. They are not so firm-fleshed and well-flavoured as the brown hare. So little do the shepherds regard them, that often they do not think it worth while to carry home those which their dogs kill, but leave them on the hill.

Another long rise and we are on the watershed between two counties, with an extensive view over the fresh green woods and fertile fields of East Lothian. A gentle breeze has accompanied us all the way, finding a voice in the heather rustling to its touch. Far off from one's fellow-men, there is a wonderful sense of companionship in the sound of a breeze. Nature whispers her secrets through it as she does through the babbling stream. It is an air river, and has its own naiads, friendly and communicative to the receptive heart. Along the hillside they came racing to meet one in the rustling breeze, and peopled the solitude with friendly presences.

The ground around stands so high that the highest hills of the range rise very little above it. Seenes Law, the object of our walk, is no more than a fair-sized mound. We have gone a mile to the far side of it, walking towards another hill by mistake. There is a good deal of marshy surface,

only partly drained for the sheep, and more hags and hidden pools than we have seen. A shepherd's stick thrust into the dark, decayed, peaty substance of some of them goes readily up to the crook, and bubbles rise from great depths. Anyone might easily be submerged in them, stepping unwarily over the hill. So take care, for there is no one to help, if the foot should stumble into a hidden mire. This way some of the old Covenanters must have come from the low country to attend conventicles among the Berwickshire hills. Here at least they were safe for a time from the pursuit of the hated dragoons. Through these morasses we know that people did find their way to listen to the powerful preaching of James Renwick at Greencleugh, where the last of our local conventicles was held.

A hill with traces of what may be an old fort is beckoning us onward. There is hardly time to reach it, though we must needs get nearer. But what is that wisp of white vapour crossing a brown slope? Trails of white cloud follow it, hiding the more distant hills, and reaching out to clutch parts of the high moor near them as with ghostly fingers. A dangerous place to be caught in a mist, and there is every promise of a thick one if we stay much longer. Behind us lies a sheep fence almost a mile away, and the safest plan is to retrace our steps as fast as possible between the peat-hags and through the boggy ground. The writhing mist-fingers have passed us, clutching and girdling the hills as if they

would strangle them. But fortunately we are at the fence before they can blot out the nearer landmarks, and soon after, with Alpine hares on every side, have reached the source of Long Grain stream.

Stream is really superfluous, for a grain is a stream. We have several names for flowing water among our hills,—syke, a small runlet making its way through rushes; grain, a larger stream; burn and water, each increasing the thought of size, until you reach the river in the Dale. All these you may pass or follow, making your way to the low country. Not far from where we stand is the Rushy Grain, flowing in another direction, and this one, which will place us beyond the power of the mist, the Long Grain. As if recognising their impotence, the mist-fingers have relaxed their grasp of the moor, though they continue to cling to the hill. The sun is struggling through the hazy clouds to the west, and lighting up the hillside with an occasional beam. It is pleasant to hear the red grouse, as from one spot or another a bird rises a short way into the air calling “Gock! Gock! Gock!” In spite of the chill the mist has brought from the sea, it is quite an enjoyable hill evening.

The head of the Grain reveals a valley in the making. Where the water trickles from the peaty moor large portions of the hill have fallen down and been carried away. The stream is first visible as a small waterfall leaping from the heath-clad surface into a rounded basin ten or twelve feet deep. Large

masses of peat like great boulders lie in it, waiting for a freshet to break them up and carry them away. They show, too, how fast the Grain is eating back into the moor. We are in a workshop of Nature, a privileged visitor behind the scenes, where she points out for us her methods of working. Farther down the valley has widened through side-slips as well as vertical ones in the direction of the stream. Some of these side-falls are bare lumps of clay, but lower still the grass has had time to cover them. Ice action has been an important agent in valley formation; here we may see how much a small stream unaided can do. At one place the water entirely disappears among fallen rubble and soil, to break out again after a hundred yards or more and form pools, where brown trout—large ones too—have ascended. Past red gravelly scaurs, steep heath-clad banks, grassy slopes, and between rugged stones, the Long Grain flows straight as an arrow down the moor. It is one of the most interesting of our hill streams, though distance makes it very inaccessible. Now we must choose our steps, for the Grain passes through a narrow gorge of deep rock, such as is found nowhere else in this part of the Lammermoors. Amid all the treelessness of the hills, young rowans are shooting up vigorously from the precipitous sides. A narrow strip of sky where the rocks approach above, and the stream rushing noisily from boulder to boulder, with a difficult path of Nature's own

making alongside, and meant for cautious feet, it is as rugged and charming a spot as one could wish. But we must come again, for it promises to be as interesting a place to botanise in as any our hills possess. From a scaur at the foot of it, under the roots of a rowan tree, a stockdove flutters with noisy wing, and circling round shows that it has left its nest.

The stream opens out into a wider valley, with a fold and hay-ricks for the sheep, though yet a long way from any dwelling. But we must leave it untraced till another day, and cross the moor to the shepherd's house. A blackcock is crooning his love-song somewhere on the hill. The air grows chillier with the sunset, and the mist gathers fast again. Before we have driven far on our way home it has closed down on everything, completely enveloping hills and higher moors.

THE WOODPECKER'S NEST.

THE country around is richly wooded. There are large belts and stretches of woodland among the fields, along the stream-side, and high on the hill slopes. From a point of vantage above the Dale no fairer scene can well be imagined than that which it presents at almost any season of the year. Isolated by its position among hills which enfold it on every side but that to which the river flows, with extensive tracts of pasture seldom disturbed by human foot, it seems to have every condition favourable to the creatures of the wild.

Birds love it. Their songs fill the woods with melody in spring-time. From the sea strangers cross the barrier of hilly country and find a quiet resting-place in this pleasant vale. Last winter more than one great grey shrike was seen in it. Kingfishers flash along the more retired reaches of the streams. Big hawks visit the moorland, and the merlin nests in the heather. In the woodlands the great spotted woodpecker is found, and though their furtive habits conceal these birds from most eyes, it is probable that within a limited area we have several

pairs. Every spring two birds make themselves heard near their nesting-place in the Castle grounds. "You can hear them nearly a mile away in the early morning," the gamekeeper said, while others at their work in the woods occasionally saw them.

With all this talk about such interesting birds, it was tantalising to have been so long in the country without seeing them, more so as there had been possible opportunities. Once a woodpecker was actually heard hammering in the little wood that is part of the house grounds. Earlier in spring the gamekeeper sent word that one had begun to make his strange mating sounds in the woodland across the stream. We went there one May evening, but only to experience the proverbial ill-fortune that attends excursions for such a purpose. The wood-wren trilled from the lofty tree, chaffinch and thrush made music everywhere, a bright-coloured redstart sang from a broken branch, but though we listened intently, of the woodpecker there was never a sound. Another afternoon, alone, I followed the East Water upwards to a higher wood where the birds had often been heard and seen. The ground, rising steeply from the glen, consists of folds like giant billows that have been permanently fixed as they rolled along the hillside. These make deep hollows full of pleasant shade on the hottest day. Probably ice had been the chief agent in producing them; a little beneath, on either bank of the Water itself,

moraines show as large hillocks of sand and water-washed stones. Standing on the summit of a wooded ridge, you look down into a maze of tree-trunks—for most part firs, larches, and ashes—that grow to a great height without a branch, struggling to reach the light. Some have been blown down, and strew the ground with broken branches, among uncurling stems of bracken fern. Its quiet and native wildness give the wood the appearance of a place that woodpeckers might haunt. Rounded holes in some of the trees confirm the suspicion, and bored timber on every side make it complete. But after a long stroll through it with eyes and ears open, the walk ended again, so far as its main purpose, in disappointment.

Last summer had gone, this one was going apace, and it appeared as though we should still have to be content with the knowledge that woodpeckers were in our woods. But here, too, the unexpected suddenly happened. There is a strong element of femininity in Nature. Go out to seek some special aspect or creature, and the chances are she draws them inside her covering veil; be apparently indifferent, with a deep love for her all the time in your heart, and she will surprise you when you least expect it with what you so long sought in vain. With a strange waywardness the birds practically came to us without our going to seek them. Yesterday the old postman stopped me on the street. He had evidently news of interest to convey. On

his long country rounds he is a close student of Nature and all her works, and few are more interested in the birds and their ways than he.

"Can ye go over to the Luggie woods to-night?" he said. "I was bidden tell ye. There's a woodpecker's nest with full-grown young. They want you to see it. Go if you can; it will be worth your while."

So on he talked in short, excited sentences. Happily it was a free night, and when the workmen's day was over, we crossed the Castle grounds to the forester's house. Near the bridge the game-keeper joined us. He had guessed our errand, and we all proceeded towards the sawmill. Behind the wooded park the banks of the stream rose abruptly to form the Primrose Glen. The footpath followed it, keeping close to the water, rough at one place with the rounded pebbles of red conglomerate rock. On the slopes above flowers of greater stitchwort gleamed white from the long grasses. The primroses that, some weeks ago, had brightened it everywhere beneath the leafing trees, were gone for another season, but a wild profusion of summer plants had begun to take their place. The narrow path waded through tall stems of wood geranium with purple flowers; water-avens of every shade, from bright yellow to beautiful purple-orange; red robins with large, rose-coloured clusters crowning their stems. Foxglove spires were hurrying to take their places in the pageant of summer, descend-

ing the slopes like a new invading army of wild flowers. Here nestled the mill, with the cottage and its well-kept garden, as retired and delightful a spot in the woodland as heart could desire.

We had not long to wait for those who were to guide us. The foresters were quite as eager as ourselves. One of them carried a short ladder to reach the nesting-hole and the young birds. Crossing an arched bridge of stone, we followed them into the wood. After a short distance they stopped and planted the ladder against a birch-tree hardly a foot in diameter. On one side a hole was chiselled, and to all appearance as perfectly rounded as any pair of compasses could make it. Three holes in line beneath a dead branch showed on the opposite side of the tree, and from one of them came the shrill calls of the young. Mounting, we could see them nicely in their shallow nest, three altogether, stretching their crimson heads upwards and crying for food. The old birds showed a momentary glimpse of black and white and crimson colours as they flew from branch to branch of the high fir-tops. Taking down the ladder, and seating ourselves on the grass some distance away, we saw them to better advantage, as they came down to the bare stems near the nest—beautifully mottled birds. Insects were very troublesome—the midge and the pinging gnat—but we felt too interested to leave until the old birds, reassured at last, entered the hole to feed their young. Their

calls sounded very loud in the evening stillness of the wood, with a sound like that of the blackbird's alarm notes. It was almost sunset, and long rays from the west pierced the shadowy twilight, bringing out the copper tints of the fir-trees, and making patches and streaks of soft orange light on the fresh green grass. The calling woodpeckers contributed an element of living interest to the beauty of the wood. Their young will be safely away in a few days. None of us would have touched them with any thought of evil. Here gamekeeper and forester recognise their value in the economy of Nature. That they may increase in the woods around is our earnest wish, increase so widely as to outlive that ignoble and sinful lust of slaughter which would destroy—all the more if they be very rare—the most beautiful creatures that God has made. Only let the birds continue long enough and that tendency will pass away. A more elevating pride in their possession will gradually take its place, and the possible chance of seeing them in our woods be a constant pleasurable source of excitement. That is surely better than having dead specimens in our homes, disfigured at best, and ceasing to interest as soon almost as we possess them, or laid aside and forgotten.

Retracing our footsteps, we still lingered to look between the tree-trunks for another glimpse of the parent birds. The path crossed an almost forgotten roadway through the wood, a band of greenery

bordered with graceful ferns that grew in tufts and masses of tropic luxuriance. This track had once connected the lower with the upper coaching-road. The old house of Norton at the end of it was an inn on the upper one a century ago. From the farm above horses were often lent in miry weather to help the coach up the steep hill. One of the coaches that ran this way on its journey to and from the Border was called the Quicksilver. For some distance beyond the wood the upper or easter and lower roads are visible from each other for more than two miles. There they join to cross the hills by a long ascent, and descend again by an easier road to the lower country and Edinburgh. Inhabitants of more than fourscore years have given us vivid descriptions of the ancient coaches. On opportunity boys clung to them as they entered the town by the lower route. One who had often done this drove a cart in his earlier manhood along the easter road where it is now lost among the cultivated fields. A new highway has taken its place, though part of the old one can be still seen, a green track passing the erstwhile inn, and skirting the wood. Following it in thought to the place where both roads cross the upland, the old days come back to memory as clearly as if the eye had once seen them. The sun is filling the Dale with soft evening light on such another night as this, while the coaches rumble westward, and now in sight of each other the guards make the quiet hills resound with the

echoes of rival horns, while the horses race along the upper and lower roads.

But the time passed apace as we loitered among the ferns in the green roadway with the old inn beside it. The sun had gone down, and to the east umber-coloured thunder-clouds rose above the high grounds. Brown owls began to hoot from the dusky shadows of the wood. It was too early for the churr of the nightjar, from the slope beyond the mill known as the Broomy Braes. In the town a number of swifts screamed in rapid flight as they wheeled round the quaint little townhouse tower. The old postman chanced to be passing on his way home. We had to stop and tell him the result of our journey. "I have seen the woodpecker just three times myself;" and then he went over the different places. He left us at last with a smile, happy that he had brought the news.

FORGOTTEN GRAVES.

IN a remote and lonesome spot on one of our higher moors lies a remarkable piece of ground. At some distance it is easily recognisable from the rest of the moorland. On every side the heather grows richly, a wide expanse of bright colouring, in autumn passing through every gradation of purple hue under sunshine and cloud shadow. Here, however, rushes, bents, and field grasses make a meadow-like circle of emerald green which, through many ages, has successfully resisted the encroachment of the characteristic plant of the moor.

Some dim memory of the old associations of this spot lingers still in the name. People in the neighbourhood who have never seen it know the place as the Borrowston or Barrowstane Rig. That is a perfect description of it—the ridge of the stones of the barrow or grave. As yet the place has given up but few of the secrets of its prehistoric past. One of those beautifully shaped bronze pots, which have been found in other places around, was unearthed when a sheep-fence was being made

across the ridge. Two mounded barrows have also been opened and urns found in them, while there are several other elevations scattered over the ground which may point to the presence of more. The stones are mostly upright—though many have fallen—and rise everywhere above the benty grasses. As thickly strewn in parts as modern gravestones in some cemetery, there must be hundreds of them within a space of eight or ten acres. Not more than two or three feet above the ground, however far they may have sunk, they do not have the appearance of that immensity which belongs to so-called Druidic stones. Yet this fact detracts little from the absorbing interest which surrounds them. Standing grey and lichen-stained on every side, there seems at first no definite plan in their arrangement, but a closer study shows them to be placed in circles all over the ridge.

One with two opened barrows stands apart among the heather; others lie farther eastward, beyond the sheep-fence. How many circles of stone there are, has probably never been recorded, since they were left to the silence of the hills. From a spot in the middle of them, the eye can trace a large outer one embracing an extent of some acres. Part if not all its circumference appears to be formed by the stones of several inner circles. On one side, though not outside these circular groups, is a rectangular patch re-

sembling a small field with a low embankment about it. A short distance farther, in the same direction, the ground rises into a gentle swelling, where rushes and stones point to a filled-up well. It may be open to question whether these belonged to the same age as the stone-circles, though no definite evidence has yet been found of their later date. Within sight of stone and barrow is one of our highest hill-forts, that on the conspicuous height known as Dabb's Hood.

In the interior of the fort has been set up, in recent years, a large monolith. We have nothing else of the kind comparable with it for size and form. Its height makes it a well-marked object in the landscape. From the moorland somewhere a little to the north of the circles, within the memory of the older inhabitants, the stone was conveyed with a large amount of labour to its present position. There it had lain for centuries. The shepherds set it up at one time for a landmark on the moors. Such a remarkable stone gathered about it local traditions to explain its existence and position. Perhaps it had once some connection with the stone-circles. Be that as it may, they and the fort were, at least, once closely connected. The one was perhaps the burying-place of the other, and of the rest of the hill-forts and old-world communities close at hand.

On a first visit to them I was fortunate enough to see the circles through the enlightened eye of

one who was taking observations of such places all over the country for permanent record. We had visited and taken the measurements of some adjoining forts earlier in the day. From the latter we held northward across a moor very little lower than the summit of the hill itself, in search of the stones. Details jotted down from a large Ordnance Survey Map guided us to them a mile away. The circles stood on the farther side of a small stream—the Wheel-burn—on a reach of ground between two tributary rills flowing into it from the north. The stones themselves appeared to be mostly water-washed boulders brought from the bed of the stream. Two taller ones set up on end guided us to the circle with the barrows which lay by itself in the moorland. We visited it first and measured the circle, which was almost quite regular. On the north side were some boulders, once placed, perhaps, to form an inner chamber or shrine. There might be forty stones or thereby, standing or lying where they had once stood on the moor. One or two low mounds within the circle still wait the scrutiny of the curious. Otherwise there are only the barrows, one close to the circle on the north, the other from sixty to seventy yards from the south side, with most of the stones which formed them scattered about. From this southern barrow rose the two taller stones which we saw first, set up perhaps by its spoilers. They may have formed

the top and bottom parts of the old burial cist. One of them had cup-marked hollows that seemed too regular to be the result of water or any such agency.

Farther eastward, among bents and rushes, we found the other circles, so thickly planted in some places as to give the impression of a maze of stones. The August sun was westerling too fast for their closer study. Nature herself, in the fulness of her moorland beauty, was a sorely distracting influence to a sympathetic spirit. An unfamiliar bird-note fell on the ear, heard only once before on a Shetland moor. Dotterel, dunlin, whimbrel all flashed through the mind as a possible explanation; but it was, as it had been then, a voice and nothing more from the wide moorland. The purple of the heather melted along the upland slopes into the translucent blue of an almost cloudless sky. Other notes of colour broke up the broad expanse of gleaming purple in the nearer distance from acres of green bracken and fawn-tinted bents. Under the light which fell upon it one part took the appearance of a dark-green carpet of richest velvety pile.

But for the note of the strange bird the moorland was silent. The lark had ceased his song; curlew and golden plover had carried their broods safely away to the lower ground. Even the red grouse gave no sound of life, though there must have been plenty of birds hidden near among the

heather. In the unclouded warmth blackfaced sheep rested in groups over the high moorland. Late into the afternoon the heat kept most of the intensity of the day.

Such places need to be visited again and again. Here a little and there a little must be the motto of him who would study them. Seasons of the year, hours of the day, with changing lights, have all to be made use of. Every hour spent in them brings out some new feature of interest. Every visit shows some fresh part in an aspect from which it was never seen before. As new thoughts spring out of a book at each close perusal, so is it with this volume of the past. But superficial study will never be sufficient. The work of the spade is above all necessary to lift some of the mystery from Borrowston Rig. The difficulty of close and oft-repeated study must always be the distance and inaccessibility of the spot. This has kept it neglected and little known, though for inherent interest the stone-circles are probably entitled to one of the highest positions among remains of the kind.

Only once have I seen them with any leisure since. Then, too, it was with a kindred spirit. The year had advanced to the middle of November. A night of frost brought a day of pale but brilliant sunshine. The path which took us through a wood on the hill-slope was thickly strewn for several hundred yards with maize against an early battue of pheasants. Pleasantly the light fell on russet

brake and ruddy tree-trunk in glints and splashes of golden radiance, brighter for the brooding shadows around. Outside we found ourselves in upland pasture divided by high, dry-built walls. Were it not for stones that project at intervals it would be almost impossible to climb them, so little footing do their steep sides afford. They are as lasting as mortared ones, and stand the weather better, when raised by a master hand. The gray-waucke rock, used to build them, cleaves like thick slate, and fits so closely as to make an almost impenetrable shelter for the sheep against the wintry blast.

As soon as we reached the open moorland, two small packs of blackgame rose before us. The plumage of the splendid male birds glistened in the sunshine as they flew away. Isolated pairs of red grouse sat quietly on little knolls; they were few, however, their numbers had been so dreadfully reduced by the cold of early summer — far more than by the gun of the sportsman. Two Alpine hares started up from the heather. Neither had lost the bluish-brown tint of summer, but another that we saw at some distance was snowy white. It is as difficult to explain these differences as it is to explain the autumnal colouring of the woods. One tree is flaming with all the glories of the sunset, another of the same kind quite near shows hardly a touch of the finger of decay. The infinite variety of Nature, reaching down through the class to every individual member, has no end.

The heath flower was past, but beneath the sunlight a tinge of purple lingered under the brown. Though faint, it was quite distinct, a ghostly reflection of autumn's vivid colouring. This gradual disappearance of colour, year by year, into the moor gives it an intense reality, and makes it as much a part of the plant as the sap that rises to feed the flame of life every spring-time. With the decay of the grasses the stones on the ridge showed to better advantage. Rugged and lichen-clad, they were more interesting in their unwritten simplicity than volumes of description and epitaph. There is a charm and an elevating power in mystery. It is this which makes it one of the elements of the sublime. To the end of time let us have a mountain that man cannot climb, a part of the world that he cannot penetrate, even a grey stone whose record he cannot read. It is a question at least if in his present state the struggle to know does not mean more for him than the knowledge itself.

The people who raised these stones and barrows on Borrowston Rig had a vein of poetry in their nature. If they held the belief that the spirits of the dead haunted the spot where their bodies were laid, a more fitting resting-place could hardly be imagined. It lay in the midst of the scenes of their everyday life, and helped to bridge the gulf between them and the dim world beyond the grave. On the moors around with their vanished forests they

had hunted the beasts of the wild or fought with invading foes. Then there was a largeness about the place that the heart of man has always loved, a roomy expansiveness that seems as appropriate in death as in life. On every side the ground of the circles passes into wide moorland and rounded height. Over it were the broad heavens where the sun shone as from a domed roof of azure, and at night the omniscient stars crept forth from the darkness to gaze in rapt and pitying stillness on the grey, weather-beaten stones with their tear-stained and blood-written record of a tragic story of human life. Winter shrouded them with her pure white snows; round them summer and autumn spread gorgeous robes of green and purple. The lark poured his sweet notes down to them from early dawn, and the hill-birds called plaintively as they circled over the dust of their dead. In the waving grasses the soft breeze whispered, through the drifting storm the wind howled like the fierce death-cry of their old battles.

As we wandered among them the sun sank, a ball of glowing red behind the hill-fort. There was a perceptible difference in the air immediately; a cold chill passed over everything, making itself felt under our heavy coats. Storm-clouds, pile upon pile of white vapour, from tints of orange passed through lurid hues to others of purple and rose. A thick, frosty fog-bank hid all the distant hills. With the falling of twilight, creepy feelings, like the tightening clutch

of invisible fingers, tugged at the heart. Hither the old peoples often came for religious purposes as well as to bury their dead. "There is no sharp line to be drawn," says one authority, writing of such places, "between the tomb and the temple." Dark and cruel rites were part of the worship. The stones may have heard the last cries of many victims. One of them, lying prone on the mossy grass, sunk by its own weight to the level of the ground, resembles a sacrificial stone. Other disturbing fancies take shape among them. The very thought of the centuries of thrilling mystery crowded thick around them presses heavy on the heart.

A snow-bunting, as we left the place, flew overhead with a twittering, musical note. By the edge of the moor flocks of golden plover swept past, flying rapidly to roost somewhere on the uplands. The heights around took on the definite, clear-cut outline of evening. They rose into the frosty air in strong relief, and left on the mind an impression of solidity and largeness which is lost in the bright light of day. By the time we reached the wood it was difficult to find the path, and some disturbed pheasants flew from their roosting-places in the branches with a startling noise of fluttering wings. The sickle form of a new moon was hardly perceptible against the frosty afterglow, but Venus shone with dazzling brilliancy higher up in the west.

THE WILDERNESS.

IN the spirit that a mother covers the greatness of her love under the apparent harshness of a name, we called the place the Wilderness. It is really the pleasantest spot in all the grounds, with a charm surpassing that of close-mown lawn or gaudy flower-bed. The reason may be that here Nature has had practically free and undisputed sway. The wilderness is almost as much her realm as any place on earth. Different generations of human beings—whose cherished possession it was in their day—have brought shrub and flower to it, carefully planting them, and then leaving them to the great Gardener's care. Tree and bush, undisturbed by hatchet and pruning-knife, grow very much at their own sweet will, and as the year advances, rough chervil, wood-aven, fern, and fox-glove, with other hardy plants, form a forest of their own. The life and fulness of summer reach out to fill every vacant space, spreading like a flood-tide. So dense and shadowy is it that one can see only a little way along the narrow winding path.

Through a rustic gateway, overgrown with traveller's joy and scarlet *tropæolum*, a few steps farther will bring one to the very heart of the wilderness. From the irregular shape of the sloping ground its extent would be difficult to compute by the eye alone: it cannot be much more than a quarter of an acre. In such a small space the variety of tree and shrub is perfectly bewildering. One might count as many as twelve different kinds, from giant sycamore or rugged Scots fir to humbler crab-apple, with more than as many different shrubs. This density and variety of vegetation give it an air of largeness out of all proportion to its real size. With its imaginary extent, there is the suggestion and feeling of the most sylvan solitude, and a spirit of peace pervades the wilderness. Many of the birds that visit it add another feature of the wild. Cole-tit and tree-creeper are never long away, and the shrill notes of golden-crested wrens sound as loud and piercing as in the stillness of an unfrequented wood. The great spotted woodpecker, on a search for new reaches of old timber, has not thought it beneath him to turn aside and prospect among its trees.

From every season of the year the wilderness extracts a gracious charm. Nowhere does winter—stern enough among our hills—look more beautiful than here, when every branch and twig is outlined in snow, and the frost-spicules glisten in the pale sunshine. Then it is almost as difficult to see far

through the trees as when they are covered with leaves, so much of the opener space is filled with the clinging whiteness. Pressing hard on the footsteps of the storm, gathering the beauty and purity of winter into a living form, finding a voice for her like a memory that strains the sweetness out of what is often harsh and unpleasant, snowdrops peep forth from the shelter of the bushes. Here they come earliest, rising thickly in every part of the wood, from last year's russet leaves, larger and more handsome than those which grow in the open. Against the light one can have no idea of their beauty and boundless numbers. The sun must be behind one for the eye to appreciate their full effect. Most of the flowers turn towards the light, and from that side it is more easy to realise their snowy purity and infinite abundance. Looked at thus, at midday from the south, or in the evening from the path on the west side of the wood, they make breadths of dazzling whiteness under the leafless trees. Their beauty is better shown by the dead leaves from which they rise in sheets and clusters. In the faintest breeze their bells swing gently, and the old fancy makes the spirit hear the fairy music. Late at night, until twilight fades into darkness, the snowy bunches glimmer among the bushes, as if the day were all too short to rejoice man with their loveliness.

The wood itself is not large enough for their numbers. Several clumps have wandered through

the open fence, and are as much at home in the old grass of the meadow. Yellow aconite grows among the snowdrops, lakelets of gold in a polar sea. But there are only two or three massed clusters of these flowers, though in some parts of the grounds they are more plentiful than the snow-drops themselves. Opening their golden chalices to the sun, the light filling them with a liquor of gold, their glowing tints framed in a ruff of fresh green leaf, it is very difficult to assign to either flower the palm of loveliness. If the one can claim to be a living embodiment of the spotless snow, the other suggests the heavenly gold of the sun.

Pale primroses—flower, then crinkled leaf enlarging as the flower passes—and clumps of yellow daffodils follow closely these favourites of the spring. They are the common primroses of glen and wood, but cowslip, oxlip, and polyanthus, planted by forgotten hands, keep their place still among them, and reveal a richness and delicacy of colouring—orange, lemon, pink, and white—which they do not have elsewhere. Most of the primrose kind, like the snowdrop, reach their best amid shadow. There are other flowers in the wood—wild hyacinth, sweet violet, blue scilla, and lungwort, with its reminiscences of old gardens and days that are long gone. Yellow loosestrife, campanula, and orange lilies, flower after flower all come in their season, until the last blossom of the year perishes in the rain-and wind-storms that blow down the glen.

It is hard to say whether the wilderness is more full of charm when lit with the glow of autumn's changing hues or in earlier summer. Towards the end of June it resembles a grotto of greenery, some dreamy sea-cave, with lights and shadows reflected from the restless waters outside. Is there anything so utterly indescribable and yet so pleasant as this ceaseless play of light and shadow on pillared stem, twisted branch, and infinite leafage—a veritable dance of delicate wood-nymphs, and a sinuous glide of many glancing feet? Here a tree stands out in a gleam of light, there another is almost lost in a depth of shadow. Flecks of light caught among the bushy thickets might be curls and tresses of Apollo's golden hair. It is a scene that is itself a wordless song, and stirs the soul like some deeply-moving melody. More is suggested than the eye rests upon, and the spirit is consciously in the presence of the mysterious and the unknown. Amid scenes such as these the thoughts grow wider by reaching constantly to something beyond the seen. Mystery is one of the highest conditions of spiritual enlargement, and Nature is the true corrective to a knowledge which narrows the thoughts by making them rest in it, for she opens gates and paths for them on every side.

The limited extent of the wilderness increases its interest by giving freer play for the expression of individual life. Every tree and shrub have a place of their own in the thoughts. Through some special

association, apart from their natural features, they have all gained a characteristic that gives each one a distinct individuality. On this one a pair of ring-doves built their nest, and filled the wood with their plaintive notes; on that the rooks struggle hard every season to raise the foundations of a rookery. Several trees have nesting-boxes for the sake of tits and other small birds. Two supported a swing for the children who visited the house. It needed only a characteristic of the kind to give the tree a special place in the mind. For that reason those of the wilderness are so much more than the trees of a large woodland: the regard and loving thoughts which have gathered about them endow them with a feeling of humanity. Whatever gets an individual character from any special feature or association is raised thereby in the scale of life.

House and wilderness stand in the last fold of an upland slope at the foot of the glen. From one part of the wood one can look along a side that rises abruptly from the stream. Across a grassy meadow, across the hedges on its farther side, the eye could see down into the glen itself. The note of nesting curlews came from the benty slopes in spring, and when the heath-bells flowered, the report of the sportsman's gun. The glen with its pasturing sheep fascinated the heart by its utter peacefulness. The mystery of the rounded hills entered into the thoughts, the moan of the breeze lifted them as with wings, the murmuring sound of

the stream played among them like chords of distant music. After the bustle and toil of the day it was a joy to rest here and muse, until the light had travelled up the farther slope, and night with her trooping shadows had begun to fill the glen, and the dark tree-trunks were almost lost in the deepening dusk.

MY SUMMER-HOUSE.

IF the most pretentious buildings were those that gathered round them the fondest associations, my summer-house would not have the place it occupies in the heart. Seen through the trees, it has all the appearance of a little hermitage. Octagonal in form, its wooden walls have been painted green to make a harmony with the leaves. A snug, thick thatching of heather covers the roof, and nothing else is seen above but the small green wooden pinnacle which has forced itself through the thatch like the spike of a helmet. On either side a thicket of shrubs is pressing closer year by year, and threatening to surround the house. Large panes of glass have been inserted in the upper half of the door, and the adjoining panel on either side is windowed above as well. Another small window opens to the fields of the townspeople, but there the eye can get only grudging glimpses through enclosing twig and green leaf. With thicket and shrub ever striving to engulf the summer-house, and trees making their branches intertwine overhead, there is little to be seen, but that little sug-

gests comfort and peace. Indoors the impression of the outside is confirmed and deepened: the one is as severely plain as the other was unobtrusive. The fixed wooden form that follows the windings of the octagonal sides and uses them for a support might seat a dozen people. The sides themselves are lined with wood painted an oaken wainscot, and above them a uniform coarse strong sheeting conceals the ribs and rafters of the building. Add to this general appearance of the interior a table in the centre often strewed with papers, a chair or two crowded into scant space, and you have its main details.

There is nothing to catch or distract the eye on the severe and simple walls. But for a gleam of colour from flower-beds visible through the windows and the green leaves pressing against their panes, the little cells in monastic houses where old-world monkish artists and men of letters transcribed ancient missals and wrote works that kept their names alive were not more plain and unpretending. The same intention which half-unconsciously moulded the character of the one may not have been without some influence on that of the other. The summer-house is really a study in the warmer season of the year. It is dedicated then to quiet thought, and so far as the spirit or the mood allows, to its expression. There the heart strives to catch some of the visions of Nature, and some of the voices of life, that they in turn may touch and help other hearts.

The outlook glorifies the brown sombre walls of the interior, and makes them a better mirror for the beauties about them. Plots where bedded plants and roses make a bright display of colouring through the sunniest months, shrubs which flower in summer on every side of the lawn, high leafy trees softening the glare of the sunshine like the coloured lights of old church windows, the lawn itself in its perennial green, have all their own delight. The months when the summer-house can be used—from April to October—are the pleasantest time of the year. Every morning Nature has some fresh charm, some new combination of colouring to show. In June, by one corner of the lawn, within easy view of the window, a thicket of bush and tree is gay with many flowers,—chestnut, white and red hawthorn, lilac and laburnum together. When its own large purple blossoms cover a rhododendron thicket by the doorway, pink and white wild roses clambering their way through it mingle their delicate tints with the purple of the heavier flower. From early spring till late October the lawn-beds show a constant succession of bright-hued flowers. Fading leaves add their own tribute of beauty. The sweet influence of the season and the charm of the passing hours sink deep into the heart and colour every thought.

By midsummer the park has grown yellow with buttercups overtopping the rising grasses. The sound of cattle quietly feeding in rich green pasture

comes through the open door. For months there has been a babble of song and bird-calls among the closing leaves. However rapt in thought the mind may be, an unusual note rarely escapes observation. The twitter of swallows happy in the sunshine, the plaintive note of bullfinches flying between the garden and a thicket of shrubs, and the moan of doves from the cool shadow of the trees, blend with the work. They filter into the quiet places of the mind as sunshine through the leaves into the depths of some woodland. Their pleasant interruptions, so far from hindering, help the work, for the thought is richer and comes more easily for influences like these. It might have only been a fallacy of the heart making the wish father to the thought, but every living creature about seemed to love the summer-house. A wandering squirrel passed close by the open door on its way across the lawn. Wild rabbits from the glen had found a place of safety by burrowing under the floor, and here they often came when dogs chased them. In the walls behind the wainscot mice were always rustling. Not only song of birds and sounds of other creatures, but the voices of people at work when the townsfolk helped one another among the fields,—hardly a silent hour.

Right pleasant it is to linger by the open door, far into the twilight, long after all work is done. The air is fragrant with the sweet scent of the may or of later flowers. Swifts circle above the

lawn, screaming their vespers before they seek their roosting-places beneath the town eaves. I watch them on sunny evenings with never-failing pleasure. Each night about the same time, according to the hour of sunset, they have a settled route of flight up and down the glen. These gatherings increase as the season proceeds, until just before they leave for the south in August there may be as many as sixty or seventy birds taking part in them, some from far distances around. Before they are in sight their shrill screaming attracts the attention. Presently they appear from behind the trees, circling and gliding gracefully overhead, turning on the side like some black-sailed yacht heeling under a breeze, rising with rapidly beating wing, or shooting downwards in long arcs of flight. For a few minutes they play, then disappear over the trees on the farther side of the lawn following the course of the glen. After a short interval they return in the same way, chasing one another, circling high on easy wing, to disappear at last for the night. There is something boyish in the loud scream and the rapid ever-changing movements of the swift. Age with its infirmities has no place for him: the heart feels younger merely to watch his happy evening flight.

Twittering swallows make themselves heard after the birds are lost to sight in the grey of approaching night. Like shadows black-headed gulls circle about the trees and over the fields, hunting for

moths. Bats flit in the open space between the trees. From the meadows partridges complain to one another. The corncrake continues his crake! crake! far into the summer night, more clearly and strongly as the darkness grows. The stream has found a louder voice in the glen. Dews moisten the sward, making every blade of grass grey with moisture. Under its beneficent influence hundreds of blooms from the rose-beds breathe their delicate incense into the still air.

The summer-house forms a meeting-point between Nature and life. It is a cloistered retreat where one may meditate on experience without any danger of becoming a dreamy recluse. Here Nature asserts herself through the love which she inspires in the heart. Through manifold and widely different channels she makes her appeal to the spirit. There is a melody in the wind that sweeps through the trees. Cirrus and large white fleecy cloud against the deep blue of heaven have a sweet language of their own. Flickering shadows of the restless leaves falling through the windows on the inside walls are as music to the soul. Everything has its own distinctive note. Could one but catch the harmony which sounds through them, and let each plant and bird with all the infinite things that move and grow tell their own tale, there would be no end to the pleasure. We bustle and talk too much about them, instead of letting them find a voice through us. We are too active, too self-

insistent, where Nature wants us to be still and passive. We speak before we hear the voice and know the meaning of the vision. A stronger self-restraint, a greater self-forgetfulness, a deeper sympathy, is needed to give our voice "the melody of the brook and the rustle of the corn."

In the summer-house I love to listen to the approach of a thunderstorm, Nature's check on the power of the burning sun. The air grows tense, so tense that an invisible hand seems to grip the head. Everything animate appears to pant and gasp for breath. Great black cloud-piles sweep up the sky. Darkness increases until it is hardly possible to read. Vivid flash dazzling the eye, then hurtle and crash of loud thunder making the whole place shake. Overhead the storm breaks with a sound like the crack of doom, and the ground smokes beneath the beat and splutter of heavily falling rain. The clouds pass and the noise dies away towards the far horizon. The sun shines forth with increased brightness, and every bird sings more lustily from the midst of the glistening leaves.

Beneath the sensible, whatever form it takes, the heart which is itself spiritual is always conscious of a spiritual principle, a world of life. This living element in Nature keeps one constantly in touch with life. Nature herself as we see her is but the expression of the infinite life which underlies all things. She never lets us get away from life and thought. So the summer-house was a compromise:

it did not carry one away from life to Nature, it kept the balance between them. Life entered it with the heart itself. Among the voices of wind and bird, of tree and flower, the voices of a living experience made themselves heard. It was no use trying to keep joys and cares out, the tightest door would have been no barrier against them. So they were allowed to enter freely, and like the song and the call of birds they too became part of the living thought, and helped it towards expression. However poor it might otherwise be, at least for them it was richer: they made it throb with the pulse of a more real humanity.

The months that were spent under the heath-clad roof passed far too swiftly. Life's many calls did not admit of its being used every day. A week might elapse without the foot ever crossing the threshold. With these interrupting intervals and the timeless happiness of pleasant work the summer had fled before the thoughts could grasp it. The summer-house pointed the moral of the old tale with its story of the night which was really a year and a day. Almost as soon as you had begun to dream its pleasant dream in the spring-time you were rudely awakened to an autumn chill in the air. The rustle of the reaper among the whitening grain followed hard on the lighter and more joyous sound of the mower in the meadow hay. Autumn really began before spring had ended, when the leaves of the winter aconite and the celandine were fading

to a pale-yellow tint. With May the leaf-sheaths dropped and strewed the ground thickly under the trees. High summer had hardly passed when winged seeds began to fall and hide among the grass, the germs of new life for future seasons. There was no hard-fast line of division between spring and autumn; they joined hands and moved together round the circling year. Nature herself kept the only calendar. The heart might have noticed how fast the days were gliding away, but the facts that recalled it were so absorbing in themselves that one forgot to read their lesson. Summer seemed still in her glory when the call of curlew and golden plover from the sky told that these birds were leaving the hills. The scream of the swift was no longer heard above the glen. Flycatcher, willow-wren, and every other migrant, went silently away. The summer-house was a watch-tower where all these things could be observed, and yet the heart omitted to read their lesson. Nature kept the clock of the year, but her hour-hand went round unmarked.

Amid this unconsciousness of thought, what men call autumn came with the song of the redbreast. The chill of the lengthening night crept farther across the day, and the hand felt it while using the pen. Survivors from the insect hosts of summer sought shelter in the summer-house, buzzing less actively about the windows. One day a wren entered by the open door in search of them. So intent was the tiny brown bird that it was some

time before it realised the possibility of danger, and flew out again with a hurried chirrup. Humble- and honey-bees also found their way inside. Wasps came to prey upon the flies or search for a place to lay up for the winter. Spiders wove webs by the corner of the large panes behind the curtains, and were never long without a prey. Brought down by intenser frosts, the leaves formed coloured patterns on the lawn. Multitudes of insects succumbed to the cold. Every day there were more dead bodies on the floor, and those left on the windows grew heavy-footed and seemed hardly able to climb the pane. A wrap became necessary to keep the limbs and feet from feeling too keenly the increasing chill. Rain-storms had drenched and washed the colours out of the flowers. Discomforts increased, and at last the key had to be turned in the door and the house left to the silence of winter. Of course one might have heated it artificially and used it for a longer part of the year, but this would have reduced its charm. It was a summer-house, a place associated with sunshine and leaf and flower. Like the dial, it numbered none but calm and sunny hours. Yet each summer spent in it was a symbol of life : it appeared in a way a lifetime, so much had been purposed for it, and it passed away so soon, and so little was done. When leaving it with the last of the books and papers, and looking back on the shut door, the old words sprang unbidden to the mind, "As a dream when one awaketh."

A ROYAL BURGH.

QUAINT and old-world, with a character of its own,—the impress of many centuries,—is this Royal Burgh. Withal intensely conservative, as you might expect a community with such a past behind it to be. Here lingered customs and ways of life long after they had passed away in other places. No old family with a long record of honourable names could well have been prouder of its ancient lineage than the town of its past. The old paths had grown sacred with the passage of so many years. Changes may have come more rapidly into the community with later days, and the opening of a light railway brought the outsider and the stranger to influence as well as share its life, yet the town and its surroundings always set you face to face with a very distant day. The longer one lives in it, the more does the past touch the thoughts. The present appears but a passing phase, a ripple that the breath of life has made upon the waters, the shadow of a cloud racing over the firmer substratum of other days. Through every accretion and change of later years the sense

of a haunting past makes its presence felt, as ribs of primeval rock force their way through the shallow soil that a few ages have sprinkled over them.

Situation and surroundings both influence and fix the habits of a place. These have had a share in moulding and preserving the life of the Burgh. Where the Dale, on its downward course, begins to contract from a large circular basin among the hills to a rapidly narrowing valley, the upland falls away in two terraces to the right bank of the river. On the higher one the houses of the Burgh stand, its street less than half a mile, and winding as gently as one of its own "acres." Here from days remote, by the help of royal charters and special privileges, it has been able to assert a sturdy independence and live a life of its own. Before the day of its railway, the Dale was largely shut off from the busy outside world. Many of the people had never left it, content to live their quiet lives among the peace of their rounded hills.

Yet are you not to imagine that the Burgh was ever entirely isolated. A pleasant situation, and an advantageous position by one of the country's main highways, always made it a centre of importance. Though apparently small and insignificant now, the town has had more than its own share of stirring events. Before the Union of the Parliaments it sent a Commissioner to the Scotch Parliament,—one of its privileges as a Royal Burgh. Close to it passed Malcolm Canmore's road, and

many of the old kings visited it in their day. It was a mustering-place for their armies, a centre for holding Justice Courts; to its woods and marshes came royal huntsmen to find a relaxation from cares of state in the pleasures of the chase. Again and again James the Fourth “raid hither to the halkin.” Royal visits brought special favours. The date of the first charter constituting it a Royal Burgh is uncertain: the reign of Robert the Bruce has been suggested, and gives as likely a date for it as any. This charter having been destroyed in the English wars, James the Fourth bestowed a new one in 1502, renewing and confirming its ancient privileges. But these marks of kingly favour give no real indication of the age of the town. Not improbably they were due in part to the sovereign’s own respect for its recognised antiquity. In any case, for more than two centuries earlier, if the supposed date of the charter be correct, it was a Burgh of Barony. Want of record appears the only reason for failure to follow the history of this old-world community further back than Canmore’s reign.

Walls strong for their day threw their protecting arms around it; and traces of two main gates remain in the names East and West Ports. The east one has left no other trace of its existence than the fact of the street still narrowing to the place where it once stood; but where the latter had been, there was till lately a crumbling remnant

of old town wall. Nature had thatched it with a coating of turf, as if to preserve this solitary fragment of the past as long as possible, but it grew unsightly and inconvenient, and by general consent was taken down. At sundown the gates were closed, and belated travellers had to pass round the town by roads which skirted the walls, and are known still as the Back Rows. The Burgh itself stood apart from the main highway which passed along the lower terrace, where the old Fort of Lauder crowned a height beside the stream. Here also stood an earlier church, scene of part of the tragedy of the royal favourites, nestling for protection close to the walls of the stronghold. Not until the seventeenth century, when the church, too, was removed to its present site, did the main thoroughfare pass through the town.

A want of uniformity in the position of the houses with regard to the street has come down from very ancient days. Even where the buildings themselves are of no great age, necessity or sentiment, or both together, has made their owners build them on the general lines of those which went before. The result in many parts is a motley collection of houses. Some of them stand gable-end towards the street, and are approached by a narrow lane upon which the doors open. Others fronting the street have recognised no necessity for being in line with their neighbours, but project far enough beyond them to admit of a small

window commanding part of the street. Though serving now little beyond the purposes of an idle curiosity, once it was a convenient porthole in times of brawling and bloodshed outside. One of the striking objects of the Burgh are the narrow passages which tunnel through the houses, often closed by a wooden doorway. Some of them lead to dwellings and other buildings, which none would ever suspect but those familiar with the town. Before the era of modern improvement they were much more numerous. The town cows used them on their way to and from the common pasture. As lately as a generation ago there were instances where the cattle passed through the dwellings themselves. At least one house stands whose paved passages, with the family rooms on either side, the cattle used, within living memory, to go to their stalls in the cowshed behind. Thus, step by step, even in the life of the Burgh, it is possible to trace a way back almost to the time when man and his cattle lived under a common roof.

Gable windows, narrow lanes, concealed houses, are silent witnesses to troubled times. Not only against the invader from without, but also against disturbers of the peace within the walls. Every old community had its own factions, ever ready on opportunity to turn either hand or deadlier weapon against one another. No one can read such records as those of the Privy Council of the

country without being constantly reminded of this side of bygone days. They cast a lurid light in places on the domestic life of the Burgh. Even when the strong hand of law had taken steps to assert itself to more effective purpose in James the Sixth's reign, through cautions to keep the peace and heavy penalties against carrying offensive weapons—for some time after the Union of the Crowns,—there were frequent family feuds attended by violence and often by bloodshed. The stilted but expressive phraseology of the day in which the charge against disturbers of the peace was made is very suggestive: “They came by way of hamesucken under cloud and silence of night.” At one period of the Burgh’s history the people who had been entrusted with offices for securing the public peace were its worst disturbers. A charge against some of the leading men of the town—Commissary Clerk and Town Clerk among others—runs that they went armed with “swordis, quhingeris, poill-axes, secretis plait sleuis, plait bonnets, and utheris weapons invasive,” by night to the pursuer’s house in the Burgh, where he and his sons were for the time, and committed a murderous assault upon them. “They moreover renewed the attack the same day about eight o’clock in the evening at the market cross of Lauder, and felled the said Gilbert [the complainant] with a pole-axe.”

Guided by many relics and suggestions of the past, mind and imagination find a pleasure in

ranging unrestrained through the years. The fallen walls rise again, and the citizens keep watch and ward by turn at the gates. Inside are lines and groups of thatched houses—a motley assemblage of old buildings gathered into this little centre of life. Here stood a brew-house, there a malt-kiln, yonder an orchard among the houses. There were mounting-stones for the convenience of horsemen along the sides of the street; these were removed in later times by order of the Town Council as hindrances to traffic. In suitable places draw-wells might be found, protected in some way for the safety of the people. The smoke of smouldering turf-fires hung lightly over the houses and scented the air. There was a picturesqueness in their thatched roofs which the use of slates has destroyed. Through open doorways came the steady, insistent click of the weaver's shuttle, and the strange, uncouth, but comfortable homespun of the people was a testimony to his diligent skill. Not all pleasant nor picturesque by any means from the point of view of more sanitary and orderly days. In front of the street-doors stood heaps of turf and more unsightly heaps with pools of water—a danger to any who stirred abroad on dark wintry nights.

Within these limits the life drama of the community wrought itself out through the centuries. Individual lives came and went between the cradle and the churchyard by the river, each one weaving its own thread into a large web that lengthened

with the years. The weaver sitting at his loom was an old-world preacher, and each movement of his shuttle from side to side, to place another thread, a parable of life. Existence had fewer artificial conditions then, and through its simplicity was more self-sufficient and contented. The trouble and strife of one period made the people happier in the peace of another. Increased domestic comforts and luxuries are the result of a life spent largely indoors. The very absence of these from ancient dwellings is itself a testimony to a freer and more open-air existence. Their extensive lands, which provided practically everything they needed in the way of food, took the inhabitants often afield. The breezy common rising to points where it commanded wide prospects of the outside world must have tempted the foot to wander then, as it does still. Round the town were butts where they could practise archery, and make shooting with the bow part of ancient gala days. One piece of ground retains the name of "Blue Butts," which is probably a corruption of Boo or Bow Butts. Inside the town walls were other means and places of enjoyment. Near the West Port, at the top of a side street, according to charters of old properties, there stood the "summer trie" or maypole, where old and young gathered to give themselves over to a spirit of joy and glad revelry. In days of stress the Tower Yard became the rallying-place of the inhabitants. Here were crowded a "Manor

Place, Tower, Fortalice, House, Yard, and Orchards," the town-dwelling and strength of the Hereditary Bailies. Not a trace remains, unless in the name Tower given to the gardens which occupy the site. There the present-day townsman plants his little plot, and flowers bloom where deeds of violence were done. The soil hides the passing of an old family who bore the name of the town, and were connected with its fortunes for many centuries. They drop out of the history of their native place with a suddenness that is almost tragic. Towards the first of the seventeenth century several houses of importance in the neighbourhood were occupied by them, but none now remain to bear their name. Troubles and differences with townsmen who would never have dared to have raised a hand or a voice against them in the day of their power, marked the approach of their rapid decadence. The ruins of their town strength and home were pulled down between the years 1699 and 1701. An old account book of the Lauderdale Estates has an entry of £133, 6s. 8d. to a mason for taking down the Tower of Lauder. In the history of old families it would be difficult to find another so old and once so powerful as that of the Lauders disappearing so abruptly out of the annals of their native place.

Even to one prepared for much that is strange and unconventional in the Burgh, a line of houses—called the Midrow—standing right in the middle

of the street, always comes as a surprise. Like a stream dividing its waters to pass round an island in the middle of its channel, the thoroughfare divides here to reunite and form a single street again at the other end. Conspicuous at the head of the Midrow, as if it had been placed there to break the force of a stream of traffic which had long ceased to flow, the hoary Town House or Tolbooth with its little, square, slate-capped tower stands. The other houses of the Row have gathered behind it as behind a natural breakwater. Passing them on the right is the original street long called the Old Causeway. That on the left is the New, which was made so lately as the seventeenth century, through gardens and outbuildings, isolating as well as originating the Midrow, whose houses, without any pretence of privacy, open directly on either side to the street. Rounded stones paved the Causeways from side to side, but in the thoroughfares these stones were lifted seventy years ago, as a danger and inconvenience to passing traffic. How uncomfortable, uneven, and dangerous such roadways may become, the side pavements only too well show! From end to end the street was once causewayed, and over its rough stones in posting days stage-coaches rumbled and swayed to the sound of the horn and the crack of the whip.

The Town House was the centre of municipal life and authority. Vested and embodied in the Chief Bailie, they gave him the power of a little

potentate upon his throne. He promulgated decrees and saw to their execution ; the power of life and death was in his hands. Two town halberds—the insignia of his authority—have been rescued from threatened oblivion by a loved and respected Provost, and hang now on the Council Chamber walls. In the recesses of the building underneath are the old prison - cells, confined chambers with little grated windows which admit only light enough to reveal their natural gloom. As desolate and woe-begone still—though long unused—as if all the sighs and groans that their walls have ever heard had continued to linger about them, and the ghosts of once wretched victims to haunt them. Within were confined hardened criminals and lawbreakers who well deserved any fate that might befall them ; but here too, through the terrible infatuation of a superstitious age, helpless women lay for weeks, until they could be burned on the Witches' Knowe. Nor was the Bailie's own office free from its shadows and cares. On him rested the burden of responsibility to a power much wider than his own—the power of the country and the throne. To him the central authority looked to see that the Burghal duties and obligations were fulfilled ; that the local levies answered to a man to the call to arms ; that the majesty of the law was asserted and maintained within his bounds. The medium and representative of national power to those about him, there were occasions when he might become

its scapegoat. In times of difficulty and peril his duties sometimes brought him into positions of danger. So late as 1598 the Earl of Home raided the town, and the Bailie of the day—Willie at the West Port—met his death, being cut to pieces with whingers at the Town House door.

In front of the steps leading up to this door stood the Mercat Cross. A circle of stones embedded in the street marked till little more than a generation ago the exact spot: the Cross itself had disappeared many years before. Associations made it—like the Bailie's office—another symbol of the power of the country and the crown. From its shadow the chief magistrate might read out unexpected news of gravest import, thrilling the hearts of the people with emotions of joy or sorrow or dread. Here they gathered hastily at the sight of a messenger on a jaded steed who had ridden hard over the hills from Edinburgh. Living in fancied peace and security, they might be summoned to arm themselves and hurry to battle with the invader at a few days' if not a few hours' notice. In the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland's Accounts are frequent references to this troubled side of old-world life. "Item the viij day of Januar [1543] to Jhonne Cok, messenger, lettres direct to Lauder, Berwik, and Roxburgh, chargeing all maner of man to be in reddynesse for resisting of the Inglysschen men." The necessities of the time led to an almost universal conscription, the men of the community

having to turn out more or less hurriedly according to the emergency, “bodin in feir of war” and “with victuals” for five or it might be fifty days. To the Cross the hurried levies gathered among sad-faced women and children, to march forth on a journey from which there might be no return. These things gave it a large place in the life of the town. The silent pillar was a stone of witness in many an old-world heart. The shadow which it cast over the sunshine in the market-place became symbolic of the deeper shadow which it cast so often over the peace and the joy of a quiet community. The eye of the thoughtful passer-by regarded it with a feeling approaching awe, behind and expressed through this simple symbol of power and majesty was so much of the tragedy of life. Surely it was something more than a coincidence that men, as soon as they realised what it stood for, gave it the name of the Mercat Cross.

Even when the Cross had passed away, and nothing remained to mark the spot but the circle of embedded stones, the burgesses still repaired to it on important days. As often as the fourth of June—George the Third’s birthday—came round, they gathered here to toast their Sovereign’s health. Standing inside, with their faces to the interior of the circle, they emptied their glasses, then cast them over their shoulders to be shivered on the street. The last act was part of their loyalty, for that which had once been used to pledge a king

must not be put to meaner use. But the spirit that led to their destruction felt prompted, it may have been, in time to preserve them as treasured mementoes of a noteworthy event. Whatever the real motive, their destruction was not always allowed to be carried out to the letter, for the girls of the community used to stand behind their patriotic sires, with outstretched skirts, to catch the glasses as they fell.

Inside the Mercat Cross circle another almost forgotten custom of the past took place on old year's night. A fire was lit, and kept burning until the morning. Those whose household fires had by any mischance gone out, came to it to get fresh firing for the new year. No neighbour must give it from her hearth, for ill-fortune would shadow those who gave out fire on old year's night. So strange customs continue to survive long after they have lost all but a shadow of their first significance,—the ghost of the past haunting and faintly revealing itself through the present. This strange superstition about fire and the domestic hearth may have been a relic from the day of Hestia, the Goddess of the hearth, or of an earlier day still when men were Nature worshippers, and lifted up their hearts to that source of light and fire, the sun.

With annual fairs, two weekly markets were held in the Burgh. Like all old towns of the kind, it was intensely Protectionist. Home goods for home markets, and a rigorous exclusion of everything

from the outside, so far as it could be carried out by means of high tariffs. It was made doubly difficult to send local goods to other towns on account of these heightened tariffs, and the heavy fines exacted at home from those who sent them. Private sales in the town were also penal, for all the merchandise had to be exposed in the market-place at a certain hour. The corn must be ground at the town mill, and town produce offered for sale at the market-place. By these and such means each Burgh sought to reap the full benefit of the customs that rose from the sale of different wares. Not only were heavier customs exacted of the stranger, according to the Burgh scale of charges, but on the same principle they were also exacted of all goods passing through the town. Protection in its most rigorous form was the law of the time. Round the Mercat Cross, the Tolbooth, and the Old Tron, the market produced in the days of its glory a noisy strife of chaffering tongues.

In coaching times the life of the town was very stirring, for every day six coaches passed either way. These were the days of numerous inns and hostelries for the comfort and sustenance of the traveller which have almost all disappeared with the need for them. One in the market-place was known as Cope's Inn, from the local tradition that this unfortunate general on his way from the battle of Prestonpans rested here. Whether he came himself through Lauder or not, many, at least, of his defeated dragoons fled

southward by the way of the Dale. One who passed away at a great age, a few years since, used to tell how his grandfather, who reached an age as great as his own, had seen a number of them riding hard over the mosses along the confines of the parish, and making for Berwick. Another of these old Inns—the Royal Oak—is typical of several more. A dwelling-house has long taken its place, but an aged townsman still remembers it. The sign-board had an oak-tree painted upon it, with King Charles among its branches, visible to the passer-by, but hidden from the red-coated soldiers represented as searching beneath it. Under the oak-tree were these lines:—

“A vanquished prince my boughs once shielded,
While searching foes around me stood :
From weary care I oft have yielded
Relief as kind and shade as good.”
“Bonum est esse hic.”

The busy passage of traffic has largely left the Burgh. Gone are the old markets with their clamour of noisy tongues. Gone, too, are the smart coaches swaying and rumbling over the causewayed streets. Most of the old town officials, Dempster, “Pypper,” with the Drummer who used to beat his drum, morning and evening, have gone. The romance of the past has almost vanished with them from these commonplace days. Yet the town itself can never become commonplace. Natural

scenes of great beauty surround it on every side. Everywhere Nature presses in upon it to make her gracious presence felt. From any part of the street, on frosty winter nights, you can hear the brown owl hooting. Curlew and plover cross it from upland to upland. Sea-gulls circle high above the houses, carrying thus far inland sounds and thoughts of tossing waves and gleaming waters. Swift and house-martin come every summer to nest under the eaves or in the window-corners. Nature with the call of the moorland, the music of the stream, and the glamour of the past, casts a light of her own over this country town.

THE MEADOW BURN.

WHERE the houses begin to thin out, the Loan road leaves the town to turn southward over the hilly upland. Before the day of the railway it was a busy route, where most of the traffic of a wide country came and went. The surface is excellent, but the road itself steep and difficult for horses. A few minutes' walk along the Loan brings one to a field-track on the right, leading to a small stream known as the Meadow Burn. From the point of view of natural scenery any one passing on the road, unless he were familiar with it, would hardly give the place a second glance. There is no approach to the depth or interest of a glen in the hollow along which the stream flows. A few small fields—the lands of some of the townsfolk—reach down to it from either side. A willow or solitary ash along its course, fences of some sort between the fields, here a bit of hedge, there some trees by a meadow, two or three feeding cattle or horses if it be summer, are the only objects that catch the eye. A place with little if any character might be a stranger's mental comment from the road. But

the standpoint from which you regard a thing makes all the difference, and for the townsman the Meadow Burn has a deep charm and an absorbing interest. Hither he has been accustomed to come from his earliest years. His field and those of his neighbours, side by side with it, belonged to their fathers and their fathers' fathers before them. Some of these plots of land have continued for generations in the same family, and of the town they have been the possession for an indefinite number of centuries. The completeness of his possession and the security of his freehold bring him a proud feeling of ownership. A landed proprietor, however broad his acres, can hardly enjoy more of that innocent pride in what he possesses, with its attendant pleasure, than does the townsman. The feeling in his case is really stronger because so much more concentrated.

To the Meadow Burn fathers have brought their children from their earliest years. Along the rough rutty field road the boy rode on the rumbling cart, or sat on the great broad-backed plough-horse with a trembling joy. From the town households came to enjoy by the burn the deep peacefulness of Sabbath evenings. It was like worship to many hearts to feel the stillness of the place stealing over their souls. On week-days the rough road led many of them to their work afield, and through rain and sunshine they watched each year's crop, comparing it with those around. What could any

stranger know of all this? There is an aspect and a standpoint which the heart alone can give, and a vision which gets its power and its vividness from the past as the tree draws nourishment and strength from the soil. Neither woodland nor wide river nor high mountain give the last touch of beauty and deep interest to Nature. She needs man with his manifold life to perfect and complete herself. You must see her through years of human association—the light of human loves, the joy of human hopes, the mist and rain of human tears,—through years of experience with all their brightness and shadow, in order to understand her deepest side. There is a strain of humanity in Nature that only man himself can bring to light. Seen through this medium of human associations, the rough track with the Meadow Burn and the fields that reach down to it light up with a hidden interest and beauty, as a plain face glows under some transfiguring and tender passion.

Within a short distance of the Loan the field road crosses the stream, which has widened at the place to a shallow ford, and there is a narrow plank for a foot-bridge. Upward by the Meadow Burn it leads, rough, stony, and rutty, passing higher into a path, and disappearing at last into a pasture-field. The brook by the side of it, confined between narrow flagstones, makes a babbling and rushing sound out of all proportion to its size. Summer and winter it gushes and babbles, louder

in the dead of the year when the water is running full and strong. Then the notes of the burn do not lose themselves among the green leaves and golden flowers of kingcups nodding to the water, or among the grasses. There is a great stillness, too, in the air; only a few companies of gnats dance silently in sheltered reaches. No sound comes but from the murmuring stream, which threads the deep silence of the empty fields with a winding rush and music of flowing water. At every season of the year right pleasant is its sound; and in summer, among feeding cattle, and meadows gay with marguerites and other flowers, no one can miss the charm of the Meadow Burn.

By its bank, as the footsteps saunter, the past draws back part of the curtains which have covered it: vanished years restore some of their lost secrets. Along the road the townsman has come for centuries to his work in the fields. Carts of every description from the earliest and rudest types have swayed and rumbled over it. The ancient names cling to the fields, as if loath to leave them. Here is Plovering Haugh, where green plover used to flock in autumn; there the Wellhill acres, richest of all the lands in the possession of the town. Beyond these lies Mustruther, where the people hold their annual sports. The name means mossy marsh, and where there is verdant meadow now, local sportsmen lay in wait for wild duck. These were the days of single-barrelled, flint-lock guns, when the proverb

about a miss being as good as a mile had a meaning it has lost in days of more precise and rapid fire.

Not natural features alone but otherwise forgotten burgesses have been commemorated by the town lands. Close to the Meadow Burn lie two or three acres of marsh-land, a bit of wild nature among the cultivated fields. Spence's Bog is the name of the place, and this name will cling to it as long as the lands exist. The town children know it well for its wealth of wild flowers. Golden kingcups, pale anemones, and lilac cuckoo-flowers make its surface a rich enamelling of pleasant colours in spring. Double buttercups—*Trollius europaeus*—come with bright June days, and light up the whole bog, rising in large clumps of handsome rounded flowers, gleaming from the midst of the lengthening grasses. Children gather them—to carry them home or cast them away by the wayside, they are so plentiful,—and multitudes more remain to live out their lives. When the spotted orchis blooms profusely among the last of the buttercups, the people gather to the haying. As happy a sight as eye can well look upon is the making of the meadow-hay. Every little field has its own group of workers, busy in the sunshine, pitching and tossing long swathes of drying grasses, or building them into hay-cocks like rounded wigwams all over the field. By-and-by these will make two or three large ricks in a corner of the field. Primitive but rapid and effective is the method by which they are brought

from every part of the meadow. A strong rope run round the middle of the haycock and attached to either side of a horse, then as the animal pulls each one moves easily and smoothly over the field. Their fathers used the same simple contrivance before them, and science could not well improve upon it. The floral clock sets the time of the year for the haymakers. In rapid succession follow the flowers of later summer,—greater trefoil, rough chervil, meadow-sweet, purple hardhead. While these bloom and fade, the harvest is reaped by the Meadow Burn, and the last sheaf of the season carted home. Sooner or later comes a wintry fall of snow to close the track and leave the stream murmuring to the listening fields and the silent air.

The house standing by itself on the other side of the public road is the home of the shepherd. He holds it from the town, and is employed to look after the sheep of the burgesses,—forty score or thereby of the Cheviot breed. Above the house stretches the pasture, where a herd tends the cows through the summer months. Early each morning he sounds his long horn as he walks along the street. The cows are brought from their stalls to be driven by him to their pasture by the Loan road. It is his duty to watch them all day, and bring them home in the twilight. The slow-moving herd, followed by the boy with his horn, carries one right to the heart of country life. But how much more impressive must the home-

coming of the kine have been when they numbered as many as a hundred! Then the cowherd had to traverse the length of the street before the last of them left him to enter by lanes and doorways to their own houses. At midday a band of married women and maidens with milking-pails went up to the pasture to relieve the full-uddered kine. Over the Loan road their lilting and laughter seem to hang still, like incense or the cadence of an old song lingering after the words have been forgotten. The song is almost silent now, and the sound of the laughter; only a little band go up the hill-road to the milking. One of the pleasantest aspects of our primitive pastoral life has wellnigh passed away.

By the Meadow Burn, as on a chart, one may see different aspects of very ancient land-holding. Within a short space are acres, hill parts, and common. The eye can rest on them here, side by side, as in no other part of the town-lands. The story of man's possession in land, from prehistoric times, is told as in a few pages. Here the workings of the old-world mind are preserved with little change from the far-off day when the heads of the people met in council to adjust the relation between the individual and the community. The town is unique over all the country in the survival of its archaic forms of land-holding. Authorities trace them back to the East and primitive forms of Aryan life.

Past the Bog and “the acres”—each acre or field cultivated according to the will of its individual owner, for in it he has full and unrestricted possession. Past the hill parts where all the owners must grow the same crop to ensure a rotation fixed by the community in council. An observant mind might mark at once the difference between acres and hill parts: the former show as a chequer-board of different crops on the hillside, but the latter present one wide surface of waving hay or corn or crop of other kind, with narrow lines of division between the fields of the different owners. Past these and the pasture to the place where the heath comes down to the Loan road. Here, as the prospect widens, it is possible to get a true idea of the extent of the town-lands covering field and meadow, marshy land and heath-clad moor. On one hand they disappear at the horizon in rolling slopes of heather, on the other they descend to the town. There are seventeen hundred acres belonging to the burgesses, and once the extent was much larger. Even now the sportsman does not think it beneath him to rent the shooting, and to keep a gamekeeper for the protection of the game. If the bag for the season is not a very large one, according to modern sporting ideas, it is capable of wonderful variety—red grouse, blackgame, partridge, snipe, with a stray chance of wild duck or woodcock, and as much ground game as might easily pay a good rent. Though once richly forested,

there is practically no woodland now. All that approaches it are a few rounded clumps of trees where the fox lays up through the day. Sheltered glen, wide pasture, and heather make the want little felt, and the sportsman has every advantage of a little estate. If he be a business man from an office in the city, he may rejoice in a goodly sweep of moorland where healthy, invigorating breezes blow, with as much game as might make a walk across it a source of constant pleasurable excitement.

Where the Meadow Burn leaves the brown heath to flow down to the fields stands the Fir Stell, with the sheep-buchts sheltering under it. Following the stream thus far is like tracing upward the stream of time. Scored on the hill by the sides of it are traces of the cultivation of far-past years. Old runrigs reach down from the slopes above to the burn, made in such a way that a rough system of drainage could readily fall into it. Remains of old turf-fences form mounded lines on the hill. Between some of the rigs are large stones firmly embedded in the ground, the ancient landmarks speaking to the heart from the midst of the years. “Man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour until the evening.” The shadows of night have long closed over their generations; but the stone rises as a witness between the present and the past. Through them the public road has been cut, and the broken ends of the raised ridges appear on both its sides. Some of the fir-trees in the stell may have weathered

the storms of a century, yet they are growing on the old cultivation, which is probably more than another century older. Morning and evening, when the sun is rising or setting, and his level rays make the smallest height cast a shadow, the ancient runrigs are very visible on the hillside.

Near the sources of the burn may be found marks of old sheep-folds that have been reduced to little mounds almost hidden among the heather. There are three in a slanting line along the hillside. These must have been very old stock places, for two of them have traces of hut-circles for the herdsmen on the upper side. Huge stones set on end form the foundation of another small building on a little terrace with a wide outlook. Its purpose and history are both lost, but strong arms have once laboured upon it. Higher yet on a hillock from which he could see widely over his ground are the more recent ruins of a shepherd's shieling. The remains of a fireplace appear on one side, and near it in the wall is a small recess where a pitcher of water or milk might have stood. Low and poor are the walls—loose-built stones with turf to fill the interstices, and break the force of the stormy blast. The sole window has been nothing more than a hole in the wall. Yet poor as it must have been, for shepherd lads with their rude health it was better than a palace. The freedom of the hills was theirs. Large spaces and far prospects gave them wider views of life; the

independent nature of their light labours made them men of good judgment, strong character, and ready resources. There is one survivor of that band who loves to speak of the happy memories of the days when from the shieling he watched his flock. By the open door—it was too dark inside—he stored his mind with the lore of many books. In these years his life took deep root; they brought their useful tribute to later days, as the streams swell the river, and he has risen to an easy and honoured age. Strong, upright, honest, warm-hearted, he stands for a large ideal of manhood. From the shieling, as the steps follow the stream downward between the runrig, a wish rises in the heart that out of the babble and prattle of its restless waters it might speak of what it has seen.

THE CASTLE.

ON an elongated knoll, close to the river, the Castle stands. Its lofty massive walls, crowned by a great central tower which rises above the highest trees of the park, make it a conspicuous object for miles around. At different periods additions have been built, and large alterations effected in the earliest part—the wing which extends north in the direction of the river. Here, more than anywhere, thoughts and afterthoughts express themselves, side by side, in the thick masonry. Each generation has contributed or altered something to suit the convenience or meet the taste of the owner of its day. The writing of different hands can be traced over the wide extent of the wall. Years have already toned down some of the changes to a closer harmony with the original design; but others, more obstinate, produce the impression of patchwork in stone. To purity and uniformity of architecture the great building makes little claim. Largely in the Scottish Baronial style, there are parts of it and aspects which produce on the mind the effect of a French chateau. Corbelled projections, wide lofty

balconies where the walls meet the roof, crow-stepped gables, square and rounded towers, are closely intermingled. Faults and anachronisms may show themselves to an architecturally trained mind, but they are almost entirely hidden from one unskilled in the niceties of the builder's art. The general impressiveness does not lose its effect on account of them: if blemishes, they are but spots upon the face of the sun. Through addition and alteration alike great thoughts and designs shine. Massiveness, dignity, strength, and age produce in the building the same effect as something grand and impressive in Nature. The present appearance of the Castle is largely due to John, Duke of Lauderdale. In the midst of ambitious intrigues, pressing affairs of Church and State, he found a more permanent pleasure in the improvement of his home. The additions which he built bear the imprint of the Duke's own character: no more striking monument in stone could have been raised to his soaring ambition than the high central tower, flanked and partly curtained by two other large ones which are corbelled and balconied above. On either side of these again is a massive, tower-like portion projecting so far forward as to form the sides of a large balcony on the first floor. Broad steps between handsome stone balustrades lead from the ground to this balcony, which is also balustraded, and over its flagged pavement to the main entrance in the middle of the high central tower. The effect of

these and later additions has been to give the Castle an extensive frontage to the south, and to hide from this side the earlier wing extending north towards the river. However dark the heart of Duke John may have been in counsel, in his ancestral home he loved the light.

A fort was constructed on the Castle hill by Edward the First to overawe the surrounding country, and protect an important line of communication with England. According to long tradition, part of his building still exists in the more ancient wing, and for centuries the Castle was known as Lauder Fort. During the wars between the two nations it was again and again taken and held by the English. The disastrous defeat of Pinkie on September 10, 1547 (Black Saturday), led to the last occupation. A month later the English forces swept over the hill and captured the fort, leaving a garrison which held it till 1550. Efforts were speedily made to recapture it; but the confused and weakened state of the country kept them from being pushed forward with any vigour. In April 1548, letters were "direct to the Sheriff of Mounteith, chargeing the inhabitantis of that sherifdome to come to Edinburgt, 12 April, for repulsion of the Ingleschemen furtht of Lauder." Exactly two years later a combined Scotch and French force laid siege to the Fort with strong artillery, and the garrison were reduced to great straits. On the first day of April 1550, "letteris"

were to be “intermit to the baronis of Eist Lothiane at thair duelling places, chargeing thame to be the morne at Edinburgh at my Lord governouris, bodin in feir of war, to pass fordwart with his grace towart Lauder for stopping of ane Inglis convoy that was till come till the fort thair.” The strong-hold appeared at the point of surrendering when an opportune peace between the two kingdoms allowed the defenders to evacuate it. The presence and the terror of the enemy produced traitors to their own country in the district, some of whom were afterwards severely punished. Of one it is recorded that “William Lauder in Lauder” was “convicted of the treasonable intercommuning, resett, supply, and assistance given to our ancient enemies, the English, near the Burgh of Lauder, continually furnishing them with meat and drink from the time of the building thereof.” For these and other such offences he was beheaded in 1549. Lauder was only one of many who helped the English garrison. As late as 1555, “George Wauchope, burgess of Lauder, produced a remission or pardon to the Privy Council for taking assurance upon himself and the other inhabitants of Lauder in 1547, during the time of the building of the Fortalice of Roxburgh, with the English Protector and Lord Gray, his Lieutenant-General, giving and granting his bond and faith that he and the other inhabitants of Lauder should be faithful subjects to the King of England; and giving his oath of fealty for observing

the same, which bond was thereafter fulfilled by his daily treasonable riding with the said English, consulting and guiding them as often as occasion required against her Majesty's subjects to their perversion and ruin. Item for his treasonably leading the Protector of England with his army, immediately after the battle of Pynkecleuche, in October 1547, to the said town of Lauder, therein to remain in Castles, &c., and leading them in bodies to various parts of the country for the destruction and slaughter of the lieges." Immediately after the Fort passed into Scottish hands, in April 1550, "it was thocht expedient be the Quenis Grace, my Lord Governour and Counsel," that, with other strongholds which the English had held, the Fort of Lauder should be "cassin doon." Sums of money were paid from the National Exchequer to messengers carrying letters with this order. They are direct "to Stow, Lauder, Peblis, and Melros, charging the inhabitantis thairof, within three houris to pas with pikis, mattokes, spades, schulis, and cast doun the strentch and wallis of the fort of Lauder." Orders of the kind did not refer to the whole of the building on Castle hill, but to the strong works which the enemy had constructed. A stronghold and dwelling combined had stood there long before the English took possession of them after Pinkie. James the Third's army lay encamped about the hill when the favourites were seized in the church. Every visible trace of the bridge,

where they were hung, has disappeared, but there is strong reason to believe that it crossed the river to the west of the Castle. The site of the old church lay on that side, and a road passed both it and the Castle to cross the river by the bridge. This old road is very visible where it has cut deep into part of the hill on its upper or western side. Near the river on the line of the road traces of an old stone pier are reported to have been once uncovered by workmen. To Lauder came the rest of the earlier Scottish monarchs, and all of them might well take up their temporary residence in the building which was both stronghold and dwelling on the Castle hill. No better place could have been chosen by Edward the First for commanding the Dale.

But he too, it seems safe to say, found older buildings where he constructed his fort. Close to the hill Richard de Morville built a church in the twelfth century. This fact makes it almost certain that he had also a strength and a dwelling here. Between the hill with its earlier buildings and the church ran an ancient road which the older tribes may have followed up and down the Dale before the day of the Romans. So much is always left to surmise; a fact here and there alone survives to light up the way into the darker depths of the past. But one has only to look at the knoll on which the Castle stands to realise that man must have taken advantage of its strong position at a very early date. The hill was once much

higher, and for that reason much stronger than it is now; parts of it have been removed at different periods to admit of more space for later and larger buildings. Further eastward, along the line of its own direction, the hill passes, in several terraces, down to a retaining wall with a park beyond. Long before the day of artillery, when the hill-ridge reached along the river-side in its full height, Nature herself must have made it a strong defensive position. Some way down the Dale, almost as close to the stream, lay a prehistoric fort or strength. An improved roadway and the work of agriculture have contributed to its disappearance, but the place can still be pointed out. Past this ancient fort, when the Dale was densely wooded, a river-track or trail of the old tribes ran. In its upward course it skirted the Castle hill, where another tribal stronghold stood. It is difficult at least to resist the conclusion that the falling terraces point to defensive earthworks, belonging to the same period as some of the pre-historic forts on the hills.

Between the Castle and the river a quiet pathway called the Lady's Walk follows the side of the hill. The slope rises steeply from it to the terrace, and is thickly clothed with high trees casting a shadow too deep for a grassy sward, but ivy riots over the ground and climbs their stems. Hardier plants have contrived to establish themselves, and there is a thick undergrowth of many varieties of

shrub in the opener places. When the beech-mast ripens, squirrels hold high carnival here, frisking and chattering on every side, among the fallen leaves as well as in the branches, their chestnut colouring in perfect accord with the tints of autumn. Dense underwood in other parts attracts the rarer warblers, and in earlier June they join more common bird minstrels in a sweet burst of song. Beside the walk itself is an ancient well of limpid water, the stones which form the sides of it overgrown with golden saxifrage and fern. From a shaded seat you can hear the steady murmur of the flowing river, and the song of birds rising and sinking, swelling and dying away, like a human orchestra. The current of the stream rises and falls in the same way, when the ear is close enough to hear it; so does the storm in the pulsations of the blast. Beneath every aspect of Nature the mind becomes conscious of these alternations of high and low, sound dying into silence and silence breaking into fresh sound. All her powers, whatever form their action takes, produce the same impression. Through and underneath them all there is the throb and the beat, the swell and the pause, of a mighty heart. One hears it by the well in the loud concert of happy birds. The whole place and scene with their cool shadow, their peace, and the aged appearance of the gnarled trees, carry the mind away from the present. No more fitting approach nor better preparation can

be found for the study of the old Castle above than the Lady's Walk.

Inside the great building are more objects of interest than can be exhausted in many days. Here, too, the thoughts are carried from point to point of the past, as they were by the outside walls and the terraced knoll on which they stand. At one place you are in an ancient turret chamber where Prince Charlie spent a night on his way south after the battle of Prestonpans; at another in easy, luxurious rooms, with all the amenities of modern life. The Duke has left the impress of his powerful personality indoors as well as on the exterior of the Castle. His are the handsome, solid mantelpieces of Carrara marble; his also the richly stuccoed roofs of many of the rooms, with wreaths and leaves marvellously true to Nature, and other designs, carried out for him by Dutch artists. In the Library, among many ancient and valuable volumes, are a New Testament beautifully transcribed by the Duke's sister, and a Virgil by his brother. Old letters are also there in his own handwriting. Among these and the books that he used, as if they preserved all that was best of him, the heart feels far more kindness than antipathy to his memory. In other rooms there are several portraits of him belonging to different periods, and it is possible, by studying them individually, to follow in his face the gradual devolution of his character. Lust of power, the duplicity of the

courtier, the inhumanity of the tyrant, have stamped themselves on his aging features, and produced an unpleasant coarseness. In one place hangs the portrait of his second wife, the reputed evil genius of his later life. A face regular and beautiful, but cold and hard, looks from the large gilt frame of her picture. Few, indeed, are those who have a good word to say of her. The Duchess would have been better without the scanty space which history has given to her memory ; local tradition, handed down from generation to generation, has mostly preserved the evil in her character ; the very family of which she became a member have no kindly feeling for a marriage which impoverished their house of both money and lands. In different rooms there is a picture-gallery of works by Lely, Reynolds, Romney, Gainsborough, and other famous artists. The line of portraits makes a family history of distinguished statesmen, naval and military men. Among them are also faces of sweet womanhood, the most impressive one of a tall, queenly lady who is stepping down a staircase from a balcony with a background of tree and sky. In her right hand she carries a bunch of white flowers, emblems of her own pure and beautiful life. The pale-green dress with its long flowing lines is caught by a brooch at the shoulder in graceful Greek style. In her stately figure is focussed the pulse and throb of active life. The gentle face shines with earnestness of soul, but it looks chastened, though more beautiful, through

suffering and constant sympathy with the grief of others, a face that even on canvas will fascinate the eye for generations to come. Longer still will the lady be remembered in the annals of the family, and in the traditions of homes where her presence often brought comfort and sunshine, by the name of "the good Countess."

There are traditions of underground passages, and of an oublie^tte down which victims once disappeared. Dark, winding, narrow steps lead to a lofty balcony with a wide view over the woods of the Dale. The Castle is said to have two hundred rooms, and the number is quite in keeping with its great extent. Some of those on the north side of the older wing have a pleasant outlook over extensive parks, well-timbered and watered, with woodland behind and a high rounded hill. From their windows the ever-changing pageant of the year can be watched amid some of Nature's pleasantest scenes. Within view, as the season proceeds, the woods advance from the time when the elm-buds open in a haze of purple, or the leafless willow clothes its boughs with grey-green, or the beeches reach the full glory of their verdant foliage, to that when they pass through the flaming tints of autumn to a wintry bareness which reveals new beauties of trunk and branch and delicate tracery of twig concealed before by the leafage of summer. From one room the eye looks down upon the river where the East Water joins it. On either side are large soft-green holms with feed-

ing sheep and browsing cattle framed in the green of the woods. Through the open casement comes the murmur of the river day and night. Here, for many generations, have human hearts heard it attuning its note to all the changes of their own experience. The voice of the flowing water fell upon the ear, like a constant expression of infinite sympathy. Sad hearts heard the moan of their own sorrows in it, rejoicing spirits caught from its tinkling sound the echo of their own gladness. The river rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and wept with those who wept. The generations were in a sense mirrored in it—their manifold hopes and fears. From the cradle life heard it, as when one puts one's ear to a sea-shell, and its never-ceasing note ushered the passing soul into the stillness of the silent land. The man-at-arms listened to it while he kept his lonely watch under the stars, and found companionship in its song; the gentle dame at her delicate task; the river helped the crooning mother to send her child to sleep. The fortunes of the House appear to have been bound up with the stream; it flowed on like an ever-watchful guardian spirit. I know not if others have thought of it in the same way, but to me the river, passing the old Castle, seems a living thing. That is why the walk behind the hill makes the best preparation for a visit to the ancient house. Sitting on the bank beside it, I can hear the murmur of the stream, and the past comes back with it, the river of life which has murmured and babbled for so

many ages within these castled walls. The story of forgotten days repeats itself, as if each generation had whispered its own joys and griefs to the flowing waters, and they were giving them back after many days. Not only joy and gladness and the promise of many years for a noble family, but the awe and terror of other days, come back with the singing of the river. Sometimes, while the heart listens, it seems as if some siren spirit, whose eyes could range both the past and the future, sang from the river where it passes the Castle of the things that were and the things that are to be.

NESTING-TIME.

THREE weeks or thereby after the rooks have commenced nesting operations, the first thrush begins to build. By this time the crocuses are abloom, and the earliest primrose, harbinger of hosts to follow, opens her pale-yellow eye to the growing light. The thrush sets her clock by them, as they set theirs by the sunshine, carrying building material—moss and withered grasses, with clay for the lining—to some likely spot. Generally one can find a thrush's nest with an egg or two, if not the full complement, before the end of March. It largely depends on the nature of the weather, for according to the old saw, if March come in like a lamb it will go out like a lion. When the days are fine, blackbirds join the thrush in making early arrangements for eggs and young, but in nine cases out of ten a thrush's nest will be first found.

Near many houses the most likely place for the first blackbird or hedge-sparrow's nest is a heap of last year's pea-sticks laid away in some odd corner. Such sites are constantly chosen by either or both of these birds. In one small heap blackbird and

hedge-sparrow successfully reared their broods within a foot of one another. Redbreast, starling, and wren, not to speak of the sparrow, soon follow, if they have not begun nesting quite as early. But you are lucky, where this bird builds near the house, to find a redbreast's nest with its ruddy-brown spotted treasures. Boldest and most confiding of them all, claiming and often taking without question shelter of man through cold and stormy weather, the redbreast does not trust any one with his secret. In places which are least suspected—concealed crannies and unlikely crevices—it is most frequently placed, though sometimes the birds are caught off their guard, if a flower-pot or some strange domestic utensil be put down as if quite unintentionally for them. There is a close resemblance between the redbreast and the moorhen in the strong fascination which such sites have. In a stream which I remember, an old pail carried down by a flood had rested end upwards in the quiet waters of a pool, and on it a pair of moorhens built their nest. In the grounds of one house redbreasts nested among other spots in the thickest depths of some Irish yews, and only the feeding of the young gave their secret away. In one yew the nest was found as high as five feet, where, strange to say—exactly in the same spot—another ground builder, a willow-wren, had hers the following year.

The character of the neighbourhood determines

the number of nests,—suitable places will always bring birds. In a garden, shrubbery and small wood, four or five pairs of thrushes, with as many pairs of hedge-sparrows, nest simultaneously. If anything untimely happen to individuals, the vacancy is filled almost as fast as water will fill up an empty place. One spring we set mouse-traps with rounded orifices in the garden and among the tulip-beds, as seeds and bulbs were being ruthlessly destroyed. The bait of pieces of toasted cheese proved irresistible, and, within a short time, ten or twelve long-tailed field-mice were caught. But one of the traps led to a tragedy which was never contemplated. One morning two hedge-sparrows were found dead side by side in it. Pecking about on the lawn, they had tried to get at the cheese, when the trap sprang and killed them instantaneously. They were lovely in their lives, and in death were not divided. The heart sorrowed over them, cut off in the midst of their love-making, beside their half-finished nest. Yet they were soon forgotten; in little more than a day another pair had taken their places, and the new male bird sang his song as brightly and cheerily as if there were no such thing as tragedy and death in the world.

The question of a nesting-site is an anxious one before the opening of the leaves. Birds may be seen searching about in every likely site, choosing one and then for some unexplained reason leaving it before the nest has been well begun. The female

bird is probably responsible for much of this. In other instances, it may be days after the nest is finished—so long that it might be thought to be forsaken—before the first egg is found. Early in the season there is more irregularity in the matter of laying, it may be as the result of structural exigencies in the female bird. So the pair get time to choose place after place, and to build more than one nest by way of keeping themselves occupied till the eggs are laid. After commencing several, other birds will return to one of the earlier nests. Generally an egg is laid on successive mornings, but in early spring some days often elapse between the appearance of different ones. This is the reason why it is difficult to calculate the exact period of incubation. Within certain limits the mother bird can make it longer or shorter by the closeness or laxity with which she sits upon the eggs. All through the season also the time taken to finish the nest depends on the problem of egg-productivity. A nest which is completed within a few days in June may take as many weeks when begun in March. One pair of tree-sparrows began to carry the first straws to their nesting-box two months before the first egg was found.

A friendly correspondent once wrote, "Why don't you study one nest day by day, from the time of its commencement until the last bird leaves it, and write down the results?" It might have made an interesting monograph on a bird's nest if carefully

done, and for a short time his advice was followed. Day after day the approximate hour was noted at which an egg appeared. In some nests a fresh egg was found every morning; but there seemed to be no hard-and-fast rule, for other birds laid their eggs with greater irregularity. Many facts, very interesting in their own way, came to light, but several things made it impossible to study the nests every day—special duties, absence from home, and the disturbance of the sitting-bird. The last drawback felt somehow like pulling up a plant to watch how it was rooting, and so a study which might have become intensely interesting had to be given up.

Jackdaws came to the chimneys for weeks in the spring-time. These were wired, but the birds must have nested in them for years before, and they returned to them every day. Some jackdaws from the town make the park steers provide a warm lining for their nests. When the cattle are lying down, they alight upon them in the most familiar manner and pluck out tufts of woolly hair. One morning I watched a bird making a visit every few minutes to a resting bullock: he pulled out hair at one place and then, hopping a little way, more at another, until he had a large beakful. The theft evidently caused no inconvenience, much less pain, the animal chewing the cud with perfect indifference all the time. This practice may be observed wherever there are cattle and jackdaws. Starlings in

the same way pilfer hair or wool from their owners' coats.

Without the experience which comes from personal observation, one might say that the least likely place in which to look for nests would be the prickly branches of an araucaria. But Nature laughs at all preconceived ideas, and birds often choose these for building—house-sparrow, chaffinch, greenfinch, and most of the thrush kind. A very safe place they must find them against four-footed marauders and bird-nesting boys. Birds are also said to dislike rhododendrons and laurels as nesting coverts. Even that prince of Nature-lovers, Richard Jefferies, makes this assertion, explaining the fact on the ground of such bushes being open and draughty underneath. Letters are sometimes written to the public prints on the same subject. People who want birds to nest freely about their houses have been discouraged from planting either of these bushes. Jefferies was too keen an observer to make such a mistake wilfully; but the probabilities are that his prejudices against them led him into it, for he intensely disliked exotics in every form. It is good to read what he says about the advantage of planting native and old English trees and bushes. But his very partiality makes him anything but impartial to the exotic in the matter at least of nesting. My own experiences, which are fairly wide, have led to an entirely different conclusion. From a close study, extending over a

number of years, of the grounds of two country-houses, planted with many laurels and rhododendrons, I have found birds resorting to them more than to any other kind of bush for nesting-places. In one line of these bushes alongside a short avenue, eight pairs of greenfinches had their nests, and there were those of other birds as well. Later observations have amply verified the same fact. A large variety of birds use laurels and rhododendrons for nesting—ring-dove, blackbird, thrush, greenfinch, hedge-sparrow, sedge-warbler, garden-warbler, chaffinch, yellow-hammer, among others. Wherever there are close coverts of either shrub, plenty of nests are likely to be found. Birds show not the least trace of antipathy to them, such as they do to trees like the lilac and laburnum.

One bird comes and another goes before it. Here starlings have increased and practically driven away a pair of stock-doves from an ivied pollard aspen. The starling has a peculiar habit of carrying eggs away from time to time from its nest: the reason for this appears to be a good deal involved in mystery. One day a starling flew from the pigeon-house carrying in its bill a pale-blue egg to one of the lawns. On going to the place we came upon an egg perfectly intact, and others have been found at other places in the same way. The fact is interesting in itself, and for the light which it might cast on the problem of the cuckoo. All the earlier nests have young birds before swallow-time,

Towards the close of April—a week or more before the swift—swallow and martin have returned. The swallow takes possession of the outhouse rafters, and the martin resorts to the window-corners. One side of the house is impossible on account of closely growing trees, but on all the others they nest in the windows, the eaves from their formation being unsuitable. Year by year a warm welcome greets them; they bring joy as well as summer on their wing. Of all the swallow tribe they are the most loved. Redbreast and martin each seek our abodes and cast themselves on human protection, but where the redbreast's confidence in man ends, the martin's begins. No sound is so pleasant as the love-song of the male to his mate—a talk rather than a song as, side by side, he babbles like the brook a number of soft pleasing notes about the nest with its eggs and the coming young. Through the windows, long before man is astir, he may be heard whispering, talking, crooning with all the music of the love in his heart.

When the young appear, martins are the most attentive of parents. Their fledglings occupy the nest much longer than those of others—to prepare them for a life which will be spent constantly on the wing. During the long brooding and feeding period the birds have a pretty habit of visiting one another's nests. A little group of martins will play for some time round a sitting bird. It may be meant to encourage her and to show an interest in

her maternal cares, but whatever the cause, sometimes a score of other martins circle round one or two nests with pleasant twitterings. These are not always the young birds of an earlier brood, as has been suggested, visiting their old home, for you may watch such parties before there are any young. I notice from time to time town birds come in this friendly way to visit the martins here, and probably these do it in turn somewhere else. One day a sudden storm of wind and rain destroyed a nest in the corner of a window. The fledglings were saved and placed in a box on the window-sill. Within a day or two the old birds rapidly made another nest, and in a way we could never discover had their young removed to it again. The old nest simply swarmed with the parasite, *Hippobosca hirundinis*.

Most of the warblers come about the same time as the swallow—willow-wren first and others soon afterward. Flycatcher and garden-warbler are among the latest of the smaller birds to arrive. Summer after summer a pair of flycatchers have built their nest in a currant bush against the garden wall. One year we netted it with other bushes, but the birds found their way in and out through a hole at the top. In the herbage by the side of the park, pheasant and partridge rear their broods and lead them out to feed among the grasses, within easy view of the windows. The pheasant may be a bad sitter, but she is a devoted mother and very anxious

when the young are threatened with danger. The male bird in all the glory of his plumage sometimes joins them, and altogether they make a pretty family group. Within grounds of nearly two acres' extent in addition to the park, twenty-five different species have nested within three or four seasons, among others the tawny owl, stock-dove, creeper, tree-pipit, hawfinch, and tree-sparrow. More might have been added with closer observation; birds are always ready to respond to some measure of protection and sanctuary.

Nesting-time with all its love-making and tender cares belongs to the sweetest season of the year. Most of the blossom has come and gone before the birds finish: pink and white apple-blossom with its faint delicate perfume, the fresh clean scent of masses of snowy hawthorn, and the cloying sweetness of woodbine and laburnum. Every evening Nature opens caskets of matchless perfume to the dewy twilight. From years of observation it were easy to believe that birds have an eye for beautiful situations. In early summer a pair of willow-warblers made their nest under a clump of primroses in the wood, so that the yellow flowers hid the rounded opening. I have remarked the same thing of a sedge-warbler's nest in the heart of rhododendron blossom, and those of a wren and greenfinch enshrined among roses. It may be no more than a coincidence, yet the mind loves to impart to the

bird its own power of realising and appreciating beauty.

The period of nesting is more protracted than most people imagine. Some birds rear two or three broods, while accidents to earlier nests prolong the work of others. Greenfinches sometimes have young, and even eggs, well into autumn, and this may explain the fact that the male bird's song lasts so long. Wood-pigeon and house-sparrow on occasion nest later still, and some pairs of martins hardly have their young forward enough for the long southward journey. The number of nests built and used in a season is never realised until the fall of the leaf. Most of those that surprise us by the openness of their situation were probably finished after the closing of the foliage. These later ones usually escape disturbance: by the time that they are built the fever of nest-hunting has passed away.

The rearing of their young takes a great deal out of the parent birds. When it is over they look jaded and worn in plumage, and have little heart for song. The bright-green and purple gloss of the starling's neck has become tarnished; faded, too, is the delicate slaty-blue of the hedge-sparrow's breast. Anxious calls of parent birds and querulous cries of young fill the air towards the close of summer. Rooks may destroy many eggs near their rookery before the thickening of the leaves, but the fledglings when they have just left the nest cause the old

birds most anxiety. This season a succession of weeks of sunshine with intermittent showers has made the food-question easy, but there are other sources of care than the weather. Cats take heavy toll of the young birds until they gain freedom of flight. Every evening before the sun is well out of sight, a brown owl visits tree and bush through the grounds. His course is marked by the excited cries of other birds, and with young of his own to feed, the havoc must be considerable. Other anxieties oppress the parents before the young are safely launched upon the world. Every egg that hatches is an additional care. The universal lot of motherhood in the midst of her deep and pure-hearted joy is the passage of the sword through her soul.

THE OLD KEEPER.

NEWER-FASHIONED keepers might have smiled at many of his ways. The old order changes in gamekeeping as in other things, and the present too soon affects to despise the ways and wisdom of the past. I never really knew him as a keeper; by the time that we met he had given up the work of his earlier manhood. For fourteen years in the afternoon of his life he was a gardener, and later still he took charge of the Public Library. Yet when he spoke of past days in the wood or on the hill, the kindling enthusiasm of his eye, and the wealth of information which he possessed about the ways of game and other creatures of the wild, made me think of him as an ideal gamekeeper. He has left, at least, one behind him for whom he will be the old keeper till the end of time.

His earlier calling was hereditary. In the thirties of last century his father came from East Lothian to be head keeper to the Lord of the Manor. The home to which he brought his family was most pleasantly situated within the Castle

grounds. Near it flow two streams, one of them the river of the Dale. A wide, fertile meadow, dotted park-like with trees, separates the house from the river. The home of Earls—an ancient hoary castle, so large and dominating as to appear a work of Nature rather than of man—occupies a commanding eminence on the opposite bank. In summer dense leafage hides all but the pinnacles of this mass of architecture, but when the leaves have fallen, the red walls show through interlacing stems and branches with the massiveness of some great cliff.

On the north side a large wood of aged beeches and firs, where dark shadows lurk in the brightest days of summer, comes close to the garden. From this wood a few trees have wandered into the park for the apparent purpose of sheltering the cottage on its other sides. The only door looks towards the east, and more woodland. Here a tributary stream leaves a deeply shaded dell to flow through the park and join the river, crossed at one place by a narrow wooden bridge for a footpath to the house. The hosts of primroses which bloom there every spring have given it their name. They star every height and hollow of its slopes under the leafing trees, and like Narcissus many of them come down to gaze enamoured at their own reflections in the waters of the stream. When spring has gone with her primroses, early summer comes with tall foxglove spires to hang their purple

bells above the rising brake. Each season brings its own wild flowers to garnish a real Titania's bower—water-aven, wood cranesbill, giant valerian, herb robert, wood hawkweed, and many more. Looking at these from the high rustic bridge in the narrow glen, or along the stream which fills it with a life and harmony of its own, or among the trees that get lost at last in what appears a solid wall of timber, or into the mazes of the bosky thickets, every aspect of Nature produces restfulness and delight. No heart could live long among such scenes—least of all a young heart—without being influenced and moulded by them.

The very house and garden took their tone from their surroundings. Nature's educative influences revealed themselves in the way in which the garden was kept. Both were enclosed within a wooden fence, with upright pales placed closely to exclude the rabbits. The present appearance of the house is the result of improvements made in the old gamekeeper's time—square-shaped, deep-eaved, with upper windows, half in the wall, half in the roof. Through a wooden gate a pathway to the door passes between a rose-bed and a small green with an Irish yew. Across one part of the fence a plum-tree has reached some of its branches to hang a rich crop of ripening fruit over the park, as if perfectly conscious of immunity from thievish hands in such a quiet spot. On another side of the front garden beyond the fence, every spring a large wild cherry

tree covers itself bride-like with masses of snowy blossom. The windows of the house are half-hidden among bushes and small trees. One wall-apple is scarlet along its stem and branches with the flowers of twining tropæolum.

This was his home for many years. Here his father's work and wood-lore created an atmosphere of their own, and the talk often turned to the life and experiences of the day. Amid such congenial surroundings the boy's own natural tastes were developed and cultivated, and, day by day, made him more intensely interested in Nature with all the creatures of the wild. A spot so retired, and with so many amenities of wood, thicket, and stream, was a centre of varied and abundant bird-life. The great spotted woodpecker came close to the cottage, and the mating sounds of the male bird could be heard through the open door. In the Primrose Glen, after sunset, goatsuckers churred as they hunted for moths. Though that was many years ago, a pair of these birds still return to nest in the wooded slopes above the East Water. White owls flitted silently down the glen in the twilight to hunt the parks by the river. They had their nests in holes in the masonry of a bridge farther up the dell ; but all of them fell at last to the gamekeeper's gun. His museum was adorned with their remains, until the beautiful plumage had lost its soft silkiness, and the dead owls shrivelled at last into mere skeletons from which all beauty had departed. What a

number of feathered creatures, hawks and other birds—many of them rare enough now,—must have covered the walls of these old museums! Man's dominion over the fowls of the air and every other kind of life has too often degenerated into mere destruction.

An ideal spot this for cultivating a boy's natural taste for pets, and numbers of different kinds of beasts and birds were kept by the old keeper and his younger brother. Their tame rabbits provided a new and healthy strain for those of the wilds. Hedgehogs caught as they hunted in the gloaming had the run of the garden until they found a ready way of escape. In the house guinea-pigs lived on terms of perfect friendship with the terriers and large dogs which lay by the fireside. The father encouraged in his boys' hearts an interest in every creature, for he wished at least one of them to follow in his steps. Bird pets they always had in great abundance. From the hills came young merlins, taken from the nest before they were in full feather, and owls from the wood. At one time they kept a pair of peregrines, and flew them at rabbits along the slopes by the stream. In time the boys took them to the moors to watch the pursuit and capture of a winged quarry, but one wandered away in a high wind and was killed. With these they had other uncommon birds: their father gave them gold and silver pheasants, and a sea-captain of their acquaintance brought

them a cockatoo and a number of quails from abroad. As the older boy took up his father's work, he set traps for otters when they wandered along the stream, and for badgers in the woods. His constantly growing knowledge of birds constituted him in time a recognised authority, and he was able to give facts of interest and permanent importance to men who were engaged on works about the birds of the country. If it be not destroyed, there exists somewhere a list of local birds written down in his own clear writing. He had seen in the exercise of his gamekeeping duties a hundred and nine different species. The list would have been interesting for comparison with the bird-life of the Dale to-day.

You may wander a long way without finding another garden where vegetable, flower, and fruit-tree reach such high perfection as in that of the Luggie. The soil may be excellent, yet the rich, smiling fruitfulness which never seems to fail is due to more than the excellence of the soil. Years of warm interest and the loving toil of human hands have largely produced it. The garden itself has helped to create and stimulate a spirit of happy pride and affectionate care in those who come to live for more or for fewer years in the cottage. It is hard to imagine the possibility of its ever having been neglected. There is an irresistible charm and a sweet compelling power about it, so that the garden has always been well tended. Blackberry bushes

lift themselves in the fulness of their lusty life to touch the house-eaves. Others hide part of the surrounding fence under a weight of clambering branches, and are covered in their season with rich, dark, shining fruit. An exuberance of growth in every part has not exhausted itself in the leafage, but has given of its bounty in equal measure to swell and perfect every root. Within a narrow space the garden is a revelation of the tremendous power of active vital forces. Life riots and wantons, like a giant in the fulness of his conscious strength, struggling to express itself in manifold forms. The place itself has been well chosen by the side of a rich river-meadow; on every side are signs of great fertility. Primrose, foxglove, and all the floral wealth of summer, fill the dell with beauty, green thickets of graceful fern encroach on the old road through the wood, large beeches rise from deep accumulations of russet leaf; in the garden Nature and man as fellow-labourers have reached still greater heights.

There was one spot in the garden which the keeper used to associate with his other memories of the old home. It was an open well among the bushes and plants, approached by a narrow pathway with steps leading down to the water. Variegated ribbon-grasses border the path still and girdle the well. This place gripped the heart-strings of those who left the house. On hot summer days the boys drew water from it to refresh the parched garden.

The satisfying of a multitude of household wants was associated in some way with the well; its cool sweet waters represented for them the water of life. It is easy to understand how wells, apart from any particular mineral virtues, should have had a sacred place so often in men's hearts. But after fifty years' residence many things increased the sorrow of leaving the old place. Mute Nature herself, so obtrusively indifferent, sometimes, to man's joy or his distress, had gathered from time and its ever-changing experiences a common humanity with those who lived in it so long. Life had breathed into its environment its own spirit, had imparted its own life, so that the place continued to be a living, haunting memory. The thoughts of those who had gone from it turned often to the deep-eaved cottage amid its sheltering woods, to the garden so full of life and beauty, and to the well reflecting the light of heaven like a bright smiling glance from the past.

Kindred tastes and common sympathies soon formed and knit fast a strong bond between myself and the old keeper. Lightly he bore the weight of his seventy years and more, and, with a favourite collie-dog at his heels, was a familiar figure on the road. From under a broad Scotch bonnet long silvery locks flowed, framing with the grizzled beard an unusually striking face,—cheeks which kept fresh the bright flush of youth, prominent nose, dark expressive eyes brimming with the

humour which so often enlivened his speech, and the hair carefully brushed back from a high forehead. Behind the unflinching eyes with their bold piercing glances there was strong personality and great soul power. With a better education and wider opportunities the old gamekeeper would have attained some eminence in the world. But the loss of ambitions of the kind was probably a gain to him; he enjoyed far more happiness from the quiet and simple life of the hills. A strong affection for the high woods of the Dale and the lonely upper moors was transmitted to him by his father. Nature taught his mind much valuable lore, widening his powers of thought, and giving him great gifts of judging men and circumstances. Of his days spent on the hills with no other company than the wild creatures which frequented them, he was always ready to speak. His eye lightened with pleasure and excitement, as if he saw vividly all that had happened many years before. He belonged to a class whose mission is largely to slay, but no one could have been more intelligently interested in beast and bird than he was. Speaking about them, he would suddenly say in his rich, pure, Scottish speech: “I’m sorry noo I didna keep a note-beuk o’ a’ thae things.” It was not only birds and beasts which occupied his thoughts,—the remains of ancient fort and barrow on the moors had led him also to the study of the past. Valuable facts of antiquarian

interest he had gathered, for he was a man of wide intelligence. Where his habits of life might have made another a recluse or a cynic, his large humanity kept him always in touch and sympathy with others.

Failing health made the old man resign his post in the Library. It had been something to live for, and the laying down of his work, more than anything, brought home to one who had once been so hale and active his rapidly failing strength. This was the time when I saw most of him. It brought him a great deal of quiet pleasure to speak about days that were long gone to a deeply interested listener. Even when hardly able through growing weakness, it became a passion to tell of his past experiences on hill and field,—a passion which appeared to become stronger as life declined. We were afraid that the excitement of talking so much might harm him; but the promise to give him another opportunity of continuing the story always brought from him the pitiful protest, "Maybe ye winna be in time." At other times some new piece of information was prefaced with the words, "I wis nearly awa' without telling ye." When sitting beside him, these words of another aged man on his deathbed came into my mind: "If I could tell you my life jest as I lived it, and ye could write it doon, everybody would hae to read it."

Bronchitis had brought on heart-affection and great weakness. His natural strength and simple,

open-air life only made the struggle harder and more full of suffering. Towards their close his days resembled the course of some river at the place where its strong current and the sea-tides begin to contend for the mastery. When he wandered in his mind it was about old days and old scenes on the hills that he mostly talked. He could only look up now with a steady, wistful, pitiful expression, half-conscious of the faces about his bed; then he sank for a time into an uneasy, broken slumber. As the end drew nearer, the troubled river of life gradually subsided. A drowsy feeling, which so often heralds death as the mists gather about a dying day, passed gently into an unconsciousness from which the spirit never rallied. So gentle was the change at last that the watchers hardly knew that life had departed until they saw the calm, untroubled peace of death passing over the pallid features. Now that the old keeper is gone, what interesting stores of knowledge gathered from his own lengthened experience and close observation of Nature have passed with him! So be it: life has always tremendous reservations which never find expression. We all have to carry away these unvoiced reaches; only a page here and there, fragments of the chapters of life's intensely interesting book, ever see the light.

THE RUIN ON THE HILL.

AN old homestead lies high on one of our upper moors. Uninhabited for almost half a century, it is known as the Dodhouse, a common Border name for the house on the hill. Situated more than eleven hundred feet above sea-level, the walls stand out against the sky, and can be seen a long way off—a picture of lonely desolation and utter forsakenness. The moorland surrounds it on every side, purpling with heath-bells in autumn, wan and white under wintry skies. Most ruined homesteads soon disappear, and it becomes difficult in time to localise even the site of the lingering name. Their stones are pulled down to build field-walls, and the buildings themselves often destroyed to keep them from giving shelter to poachers. Here, in the midst of the moorland, there have been no walls to build and the houses are left to the slow decay of time. Not far from the ruins is an ancient hill-camp, looking down from its position of vantage on a quiet glen hundreds of feet beneath. One of those long-disused roads, approaching the Dale from the sea, passes between them, close to

the house which has been built for convenience by the side of it.

Though so conspicuous from its lofty position, few ever visit the Dodhouse. But for the shepherd on his rounds, or a passing sportsman in the grouse season, it is left practically to the wild creatures and the silent loneliness of the hills. The place carries no story from the past to excite any deep interest, and the walls, standing cold and bare on the hill-top, possess no attractive feature. I visited it first in early May, when hill and glen were steeped in brilliant sunshine. The golden plover had begun to utter the wild, sweet notes of the nesting season, circling through the clear warm air, and gliding earthward with buoyant, graceful flight, to alight with uplifted wings on some little eminence among the heather. Is there any sound so suggestive of boisterous, voiceless delight as the spring-song of the plover? To me it always recalls one of those choruses attached to the oldest songs that, for want of words strong enough to express the joy, end in a happy, rollicking torrent of repeated syllables.

The roadway passes a three-sided patch of ground beside the houses, which had once been a garden. Traces of a surrounding wall are visible, and at one place are two rugged, weather-beaten hawthorn trees. Everywhere else the rough, wild grasses of the hill have overgrown it. All semblance to a garden, tended by loving human fingers, has been

entirely obliterated. A curlew rose from this spot, and the note of querulous discontent said as plainly as any words that its nesting-place had been disturbed. The wildest part of the moor could not have been more suited to its purpose: the nesting curlew was an expression of the perfect solitude of the place.

In the low country skirting the hills the hedges were in full leaf, framing with their rich, deep green the lighter green of enclosed meadows; but at this height one of the hawthorns had just begun to burst its bud-sheaths; the twigs of the other were as bare as in winter. Above, they had been twisted and bent by the winds blowing over miles of exposed moorland; the trunks beneath were smooth and glistering with the rubbing of many sheep. Here they often gather to get shelter from the blast and the storm. A dipping-place has been made for them close to the houses, and round an enclosed trough are all the utensils necessary for the purpose. These are the only traces of a living present connected with the place.

Barns and other outhouses are in wonderful preservation; little pieces of tile, meant to bind the walls closer together, show among the stones, in some places so thickly as to form a dingy-red pattern. You can see niches at intervals, where beams had once been fixed, and the barn reached the dignity of a two-storied building. The dwelling-

house is in the worst state of decay: it may have been older than the rest of the homestead, and the walls appear to have been built more rudely. Though known once by the high-sounding name of Riddel's Lodge, the house must have had as little claim to such a pretentious designation as many another building of the kind in a lower world. It has all the appearance of having been little more than a two-roomed cottage. Portions of an interior wall have the remains of a coating of plaster, and above what had been a fireplace are nails driven between the stones which may have been used once for the purpose of hanging things of ornament or use. These, though insignificant enough, by their suggestiveness bring the living inhabitants very near to the thoughts. The house itself stood at right angles to the outhouses, between them and the road, looking to the south. A well on a sloping bank before the door has been almost filled with stones and turf, only a foot or two of the loose-built masonry of the rounded sides showing. The luxuriant growth of rushes about it reveals the presence of water there still. Some mounds on one side may mark older foundations. Apart from the size of the house, the place had made some attempt to keep up the dignity of its name. The garden was a large one, and a gate into the meadow on the south side was hung on supports made of a whale's jawbones, the last remnant of them being taken

away for the purpose of making walking-sticks. It may have been an independent property—its boundary on one side is marked by a high turf wall—before it became part of the large sheep-farm which lies all about it. Such are some of the characteristic points of the homestead on the hill.

On such a lofty site, with little or no shelter, the winds must have been very snell and harsh in winter. The house sent forth hardy sons and daughters into the world. Well-educated, too, if surroundings consciously or unconsciously influence life, in the lore of Nature's school. Such a wide prospect of hill and valley round a home it would be difficult to find anywhere. From the door you can see as far as the Moorfoots and more distant hills, looking over a well-wooded, undulating country. What a delightful spot from which to watch the sunsets! Here the most gorgeous hues of the dying day could spread athwart the wide expanse of the western sky with nothing to hide them. Evening by evening the lights purpled so delicately on the hillside that the blindest eye must have caught some glimpse of their beauty. The full-orbed moon rose from the clear east, beneath the hush of night, to flood moorland and glen with her cold, calm, silvery light. A place for deep feeling, and for thoughts that reached in ever-enlarging waves to the far horizon. A spot to purify life of its more sordid elements, as the breeze on the

heights blows from the mind the vapours and frets of the everyday world. Could one live long among them without falling in love with these rounded hills and wide lonesome moors? They may want the rugged grandeur of northern heights, but they have a power of casting a spell over the spirit which is quite their own. With their ample, rolling curves, their gentle, full-bosomed slopes, and rounded summits, they suggest the grace and beauty of woman rather than the strength and ruggedness of man. From an outside or casual point of view they may sometimes disappoint. Even Chalmers in his ‘Caledonia’ said a century ago of the Lammermoors that they form “an exclusive curvature of unsightly heights.” That is one of those sweeping, sententious statements that gather a kind of authority from their own strength of assertion, entirely apart from their regard to facts. It is the flippant criticism of an outsider, such as in life we are too prone to fling at people we don’t know. No one who has lived among them, or even walked along their winding glens, would spend time over its contradiction. The force of passion and the agonising sense of painful separation in the lines of one who knew and loved them for many years unintentionally gives an impression which is far deeper and truer to fact than any outside description, which would dismiss them lightly with a disparaging word. Set the one over against the other, and if you are not happy enough to know them, draw your own unbiased conclusion.

This is the testimony of a lover, whose love rested on intimate knowledge and deep insight into Nature's heart :—

“O, wild and stormy Lammermoor !
Would I could feel once more
The cold north wind, the wintry blast,
That sweeps thy mountains o'er.
Would I could see thy drifted snow,
Deep, deep in cleugh and glen,
And hear the scream of the wild birds,
And was free on thy hills again.”

The words have rung in my ears while sitting by the deserted doorstep. Here the many-sided drama of existence, with all its laughter and its tears, has been played through many generations, and the shuttle, moved by unseen fingers, has woven threads of light and shade into the living fabric. You cannot stand long among the deserted houses without thinking of the number of human hearts that have beat here to the music of life—its plaintive and joyous strains. The first feeble cry of infancy rose from the fallen chamber; the melodious laughter of the maiden filled it, before she knew a deep-hearted care; the young man, rejoicing in his strength, planned beneath its roof a great career; old age sat musing by the fireside, while the wintry blast howled in the chimney. No thrilling story has outlived the place, yet the heart cannot help weaving stories of its own. But they are all gone. The mountain sheep has taken their places, and the mountain hare

burrows in the fallen stones. “In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread.” So they lived, and so they toiled; but Nature has returned to her own again.

Some hill-lambs raced along the slopes of the camp, turning and racing back again. Buoyant, light-hearted creatures, they represented ignorance and innocence. Their lives were as radiant as the heavens above them, and the future never dashed the present with a single care. Devoid of hope, they were equally devoid of fear and regret. The narrow horizon of the playing lambs kept them from spilling any of the contents of their cup of bliss. Indifferent to the past and the future, they rejoiced in the present, and so their joy, within its own limits, was perfect; divorced from all consciousness of time, there was a suggestion of the eternal in it. Man must look before and after; he must strive to pierce the mystery of things: they live in the present hour. His stolen morsel of the apple from the forbidden tree has created in the human heart an insatiable hunger. The fire snatched in secret from heaven has become a passion, making him ponder on the secret of the ruined house, and far-off mysteries over which the lambs only danced and played. There are moods in which the spirit envies them, as it beats against the barred gates in vain, hearing but faint echoes of the voices within, driven back and depressed by the burden of the old words, “For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that

increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." But these are only moods, clouds that hide for a moment the light of the sunshine. Give me man's destiny, with its large compensations, his thoughts and feelings in spite of their thorns, his power to bring back and meditate on the past—above all, his large-hearted faith in the future. My joy is fuller than theirs—it is larger for its larger horizons; it is too deep for expression.

Happy larks sing over the desolate homestead, rising from the rushes and the bent-covered moor. The snipe bleats and hums in the westering sunshine. Other birds fill the air with the glad-hearted notes of their nesting season. The unclouded light casts a living radiance over everything. A glory rests on the hillside, and the heart is conscious of promise and hope in the throbbing life of the sunshine. The thoughts become more conscious of a deeper joy, that finds within itself a place and a purpose for the mystery of both ruin and pain. Give me the joy of the lambs frolicking on the hill-fort; but let it come, not through ignorance, but through a fuller knowledge of the future. Not a selfish and self-centred joy, but one that shall be the portion of all about me: my joy gets its light and its life from the joy of my fellow-man. To be able to realise such a joy as wide as humanity is itself a proof and a prophecy of it. The day will come when the race will enter into its fuller birthright, gathered from behind as well as

from before. The old waste places shall be built again, and the desolate chambers re-echo the shouts and laughter of those who are gone. The locust-eaten years shall return. I shall find my past waiting for me somewhere in the future; the world's to-morrow is yesterday with a new face. Life's wheel will bring me round again to all I have ever lost. Have you not sometimes felt that the old scenes as well as the old faces shall all have a share in that waiting past? To another it may seem a dreamer's mysticism; to me it is the soberest truth, one of life's deepest intuitions. That is my faith, and it falls on the ruined walls as the sunshine of heaven, until they, instead of a regret, become a promise of a future that shall reach its unshadowed fulfilment by the way of the shadowed past.

OLD, UNHAPPY, FAR-OFF THINGS.

THERE is a strain of vagrancy in the most settled and contented human being which asserts itself in different ways. The craving for excitement of some kind; the cultivation of sport, whether it be in the hunting, the football, or other fields, are all manifestations of it. We quieter mortals seek it after our own fashion. It is really a hark-back to pristine days of the race and primitive conditions of life, the result of tendencies that can never be eradicated, because they have entered into the very fibre of our human nature. The earliest man spent his time in constant touch with the outside world, and being burdened with few belongings, could move easily from place to place, of choice or of necessity, where there were flocks or herds to be fed. I find this ancestral man asserting himself in me at intermittent periods, entirely apart from the season of the year, making indoor life more difficult for the time. He keeps suggesting to the mind inducements to go forth, new fields, fresh objects of interest; but one sometimes wonders, after all, whether it be really these or the man himself that is

the principal moving agent. Here he was probably a hill-man, and so it is to the hills that he carries the footsteps most frequently.

This call of the past and the outside world in the blood was strong lately. Under its influence I wrote to a shepherd-friend, who had promised to take me over a new and most interesting part of the hills. We met at an intermediate point, and drove to the place where we were to leave the road for the heather. The bents were browning fast on the hill-side, and often the ground was soft and marshy, such as snipe love. Several of these birds rose before us, rapidly doubling and twisting into the air. The shepherd's steady pace soon brought us to the top of the hill. On a flat tableland two large cairns of stone, built up in part by later hands into the form of brochs, stood beside us. They can be seen for many miles around, conspicuous landmarks, and give the hill its name—Twinlaw Hill or the hill of the Twinlaw Cairns. Old legend, preserved in one of our Border ballads, has cast over both of them a sable cloak of saddening story. The old people of the country-side tell it still by the fireside. Two twin-brothers of the name of Edgar were born at the castled keep on the left, rising grey and stern above its encircling trees. One of them, in infancy, was carried away by a raiding force to England. There he grew up a youth of brave heart, and well trained to feats of arms. In course of time he, too, led a strong force, like that which had carried

him away across the Border, and an army of defence with his father and twin-brother met it somewhere here. It was the day of frequent decision by single combat, and by the strange irony of fate the two brothers, all unconscious of their relationship, stood forth to champion their own armies. They both fought to the death, and after deeds of well-matched daring and skill, one fell dead, the other mortally wounded. The horror of the dreadful tragedy, becoming known, was too much for the afflicted father. As a tribute to their youth and matchless courage, and to commemorate their unhappy end, the two armies made a line of men to a stream on the other side of the hill, and the stones were handed from man to man to build the cairns. So the country-folks will tell you, relating the sad story with all the detail of history. What ground there is for it, how much truth in it, cannot be told. The story of the Edgar brothers, which is common to different places, may be an echo of older tragedies connected with the two cairns. The appearance of the stones lends an air of truth to it; but they are really weather-worn. The rains and the storms of centuries have washed them, smoothing down their rugged edges almost as if it had been done by the constant flow of water over them. One is sorry to detract from the romance of this side of the tale, but there are all the evidences of a quarry long disused on the south side of the hill, not very far away, from which they have once been built. We examined

stones from both, and found them to correspond in every way. Yet, instead of reducing the age of these weather-worn heaps, it adds largely to it. They were barrows, in all probability, of prehistoric warriors, men of note in their day, grey-mossed tributes of respect from a rude age to their memory. Twin-cairns at least they are, placed side by side on this windy hill-top, keeping their lone watch over the country beneath them, as the Sphinx with her sightless gaze looks over the desert. Behind are the hills and long miles of moor that have not lost the first vivid purple of the heath bloom: below is the marshy district of Berwickshire, the region of the struthers or bogs, with the fertile Merse in a setting of hazy English hills. Hume Castle stands on its height, lifting into the sky desolate walls which mock its former grandeur. In the foreground mill-ponds and a moorland loch are like eyes in the landscape staring steadily upwards. Those strange hills—the Dirrington Laws—Nature's own twin-cairns, rise abruptly from the low country around them. The Twinlaw hill, as some bastion, stands at one end of the main Lammermoor range, from which the spirits of the long dead keep their ceaseless watch.

We left them at last, following a ridge through the heather, for another cairn some distance away. Under the name of the Pulpit Cairn, this one commemorates the “killing days.” Somewhere near the Conventicle of Greencleugh was held. We visited two cleughs in search of the place, but

there was nothing definite to mark it. One conventicle, at least, was held in the hollow below the cairn. Many of those gatherings took place close to some well, whose water the proscribed ministers occasionally used to baptise infants brought for the sacred rite. Perhaps the well itself had an odour of sanctity lingering about it, the heritage of earlier days. Here, with mountain streams on every side, there was no lack of water for any purpose, but a mineral well does exist near, with a reputation from the past for its virtues. We searched for Elliot's Well in a bog of the same name, but unfortunately without success. There it waits the closer scrutiny of another day. If for nothing else, it was worth while turning much further out of our way to see the grass of Parnassus, which lifted its snowy-white petals on every side. Gay as many of the moister parts of our hills are with this beautiful flower, there are few so gay as this. I love the name, though there is nothing of the grass about it. So rich with chaste beauty, the flower suggests nothing so aptly as the pure, un-trodden snows of some heaven-kissing hill.

The Pulpit one has none of the impressiveness of the other two cairns. As they have been, it has all the appearance of having been built on the site as well as with the stones of an older barrow. Whether the cairn in its present shape has come down from Covenanting times is hard to say; possibly enough it may have. On each of its four sides is an apsed

hollow, with a rough stone for a seat, where they could have kept an outlook on every side. Vandalism has been at work upon it, and part of the cairn threatens to fall. So far away among the hills, hands for which nothing is sacred, nothing hallowed, however venerable, have pulled out some of the stones—perhaps to get at a mountain hare—and it is dangerous to sit in one of the apses. The men of the Covenant come and go across the thoughts which reach centuries further into the past to the time of the earliest tenant of the cairn. What a solitary spot for his last long rest, miles away from the homes of the living. The stream like a tender mother sings through the ages a lullaby to the dreamless sleeper. The Twinlaw Cairns stand over against his grave, conspicuous on the skyline, but far away. Here he rested alone, before the men of the Covenant used for their purpose the stones piled above his dust. The thoughts draped themselves in sombre colours by his resting-place, and the words of the great Minstrel would insist on repeating their haunting refrain, as if they had been written for him alone:—

“There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to awake,
Never, oh ! never.”

But suddenly the mist closed about us, coming rapidly over the top of the ridge. For a few

minutes we were in a perfect cloud, with everything but the stream beside us and a narrow circle of moorland blotted out. With the shepherd it was easy to feel perfectly safe, he knew the hill so well. So we left the guidance of the stream to follow a gentle slope, wrapped in the mist-cloud all the time. As we walked it receded a little on every side, though we were still in a very limited world, which closed behind as fast as it opened before us. All at once we came on fallen timber in a wet, boggy spot. Some of the trees lay on the surface, others projected from the ground, elbows of twisted branches, pieces of gnarled stems. Part of a trunk stood where it had grown. Exposed to wind and storm, year after year, the stiff fibre of the timber had resisted the weather wonderfully. At such a distance on the moor, out of sight of anything of the kind, of even a bush larger than the heath about them, these trees affected strangely both thought and imagination. They resembled ruined houses that have been long uninhabited. It was evidently many generations since the sap of life pulsed through them in the spring-time. Though they sounded solid and firm to the foot, without a shred of bark to cover their naked stems, discoloured with constant weathering, they must have lain there for a great many years. The shepherd had never heard of them; the oldest people do not remember any wood growing there. Stumbling upon them through the drifting mist, they affected the spirit like part

of the ruins of a former world. We were thankful to strike one of the old tracks that traverse the hill. It might be followed, my companion said, as far as Peeblesshire, and flocks of sheep and lambs often used it in bygone times. There were gates where the hill-fences crossed it, for these ancient rights - of - way are jealously guarded. Where obstructions are put upon them, farmers and others have come long distances to cut them down. Some of them saved the cost of the customs exacted at so much each score of sheep, where they passed through the toll house gate, although, here and there, they struck or crossed a later road, and the town or other local authorities were not slow to use the fact for the benefit of their own revenues. One ancient track—the Girthgate, a road of Church sanctuary—had toll exacted at a point where it crossed one of our public roads. There was no toll house, but someone went to the place to watch for flocks of passing sheep about Lammas-time. The daughter of the last tenant of these tolls still lives among us. I call him the tenant, for he farmed them from the town, paying rent to the Council for the privilege of gathering as much as he could. The custom, which fell into disuse not much more than a quarter of a century ago, is a relic of long bygone days. But, apart from toll houses and their charges, shepherds loved to drive their flocks along these otherwise almost disused rights-of-way for the bite of grass from the road

itself, the softness underfoot, and the absence of all the noise and disturbance of more modern roads. So though practically unknown to the public generally, some of these tracks leading through fields and by strange sequestered places have been used till lately, or may be somewhere still in use. As some spirit from the past, the shadow of an older world always haunts and permeates the new.

A green track reached before us to the place where it divided to go different ways, one on either side of the high ridge. There we separated to follow each our own and more convenient path. Mine led through pasture and corn-field, with blackgame getting up from among the short, stunted stems where they could easily reach the ears, and with partridges in the open. A stoat ran from one heap of stones to another; it was a wild and lonely spot where such creatures might live in perfect security. Yet here, too, the drama of human life had been played for centuries. An old gnarled sycamore by the road marked the place where a farmhouse once had been. In spite of the closing night, it was difficult to resist an impulse to visit it. Only traces of the foundation of houses and garden remained; every available stone had been used to build field-walls. The destruction was complete, in spite of the fact that the house was inhabited within recent memory. The tree is the only living relic of its day, old, rugged, time-worn, with its strong roots exposed in part, and then striking down to grasp

the ground, like some strong octopus-creature. Nettles grow about the site of the house, and docks round that of the out-buildings, as if the shadow of the primeval curse haunted even the place where man and his works had once been. A feeling almost of fear grew with the growing dark in the lonely spot. It was some time afterward before I realised all that it meant. When the lands were added to the large farm of which it is now a part, this place became the shepherd's home. One of the last of them brought upon himself a melancholy and untimely end. The farmer's son came to find out why the shepherd did not appear one morning at his usual hour. Approaching a tree near the house, there suspended from one of its branches his eye chanced upon a most dreadful thing. The clinging horror of it all unconsciously brooded over the place. That night it was a relief to come on some feeding horses in a neighbouring meadow: they begat a sense of companionship, and brought the thoughts again into closer touch with life and the living present.

THE GARDEN-WARBLER'S RETURN.

ALL the other migrants have appeared in their old places. The willow-wren came first with a soft April breeze. One morning we saw a male bird busily hunting insects in a red japonica bush that framed a window, as much at home as if he had never been away. No trace of fatigue interfered with the happy activity of his movements, nor did the spruce and dainty plumage appear at all travel-stained after his long, hurried, northward journey. Any one who has watched for their coming must have been struck by this: it is one of the marvels of migrant life. They reach different parts of the country practically about the same time. From the sunny South to the colder North the dates of their arrival are separated only by a day or two. Local circumstances of climate may affect it, but hardly to any appreciable extent. Yet in every case the migrants are as free from any appearance of weariness as if the long journey had taken months to accomplish, and as fresh in plumage as though they had dropped out of heaven into the spots where first we see them.

Within a few days other willow-warblers came, and the wood beside the house was full of song. A redstart followed them closely. He flitted along the top of a wall, making his tail quiver after the manner of the bird, and looking supremely conscious of his brilliant plumage. From one of the field trees the tree-pipit took happy flights of song into the air. His whole body swelled and thrilled with ecstatic bursts of melody as he returned to the tree or the ground to rise and sing again. Barn swallows twittered on an outhouse roof, and the martins visited the windows where they had raised last year's broods. With the swifts, flycatchers came to prepare their nesting-place in one of the bushes of the garden wall. Crake! Crake!—the call of the corncrake—rose from the young hay-field, filling the dewy air, and lasting far into the night. They came as quietly and unobtrusively into their places as the first leaf or the first flower. Walking along the footpath, your eye suddenly falls upon it, blue dog-violet or pale primrose. It was not there yesterday, and it is there to-day. As silently did the birds glide into their accustomed haunts. There is careful preparation in all Nature's processes; detail follows detail, effect succeeds cause and leads itself through a never-ceasing law of causation to ever new effects; every tiny step is there. Yet we see so little of the inward working, and miss so many of the accompanying changes, that the fact is accomplished before we can realise it. Man

cannot hide his work; the necessities of his life make him carry it on by fits and starts; he has not yet learned the secret of perpetual motion, of never-ceasing activity. But in Nature, through a ceaseless exercise of power in every detail, the old itself is always becoming new. No interval is needed for shifting the scenery; the change has come while you are looking, something new has appeared which you were not conscious of the minute before. That is the reason why the bird or the flower, causing a momentary feeling of surprise by their sudden appearance, are so soon accepted as part of the general system of things.

From the land of sunshine the migrant birds brought milder, brighter days, and the world was a happier place for their presence. They set a crown on the joy of earlier song—silvery carol of mavis and blackbird's mellow lay. The genial influences of the sweet spring-time made themselves felt everywhere. As yet the trees did not need to shelter themselves against the scorching heat of summer with a thick mantle of leaves. They had lost the bareness of winter, and were at that exquisite stage where trunk and branch just show through a gauzy veil of green. Some of them had even begun to adorn themselves with spangles and jewels of opening blossom. The time was ripe for another singer to voice the beauties of the season, as other songsters had voiced those of the earlier spring.

The old gamekeeper gave us the first hint of the

singer we looked for. After long years with the gun, his step failed on the steep hillside, and he took to the quieter task of gardening. For years he tended the garden where the flycatchers nested against the wall. His life in the woods and among the hills had made him observant and keen-sighted. No one knew the bird-life of the country better than he did. This loving interest he carried with him into his new work. Every bird that visited the house and the grounds was familiar to him. I came from a part of the country where garden-warblers, unless in books, were hardly known ; and he spoke of the stranger birds which appeared at intermittent years, and remained to nest in the shrubbery. The past came back to him as he talked of them, the early summer flowers, the red hawthorn, and the laburnum trees that covered the walk into the garden with a wealth of golden tresses. Old memories lighted up his whole expression while he talked about the bird which sang of the life and beauty about him. Often he had paused from the toil of the spade to listen. His soul came into his eyes as he put his thoughts into the familiar tongue : "Eh, my ! but he was a bonnie singer."

We looked for the garden-warbler, morning by morning, the first year of our stay in the new home. All the rest of the summer birds had returned, and we had begun to despair of him, when one mild Sunday morning he quietly took his place among them. A mellow, babbling song introduced

him, coming in bursts from the heart of a willow tree. More restless than the willow-wren itself, the hidden singer soon showed himself. He seemed glad to be in the old haunts again; every note was full of his joy. As one that has left home for a time, goes round the garden and each familiar spot as soon as he returns, marking every little difference, noticing everything as if to gain a new and more loving possession, the restless happiness of the garden-warbler drove him from place to place of his old domain. From the willow he flew into a wild cherry, snowy-white with flower, and again into a higher tree, singing all the time, a happy, rollicking song, without the depth that his experience of love-making and nesting would bring; a song of life's lighter hours with the future all full of joy before him, but for that reason more shallow. From the high tree he came back to the willow, and from the willow disappeared into the evergreen bushes—a restlessness born of expectation and longing. The passion of his heart sought an object he could not find in tree or flower. So he went on singing, filling everything with sweet sounds, raying them forth as the sun sends out beams of light, searching on every side for some other world to fill with his life and light. He did not yet realise the feeling that made him sing until he saw it converging, taking form, and returning to him deeper and more real from another heart.

All life appeared richer for this new singer; he

became a voice for the love and beauty which underlie all things. A few days more and another bird joined him to share the love that came to him from the sunshine, the buttercups in the old meadow, the fresh green leaves, and became his more truly when it passed through this new heart. Together the garden-warblers spent the gladsome hours, flying between the wood and the bushes, rehearsing in their own way the human love-drama. The male sang almost incessantly. In short intervals of silence, an approaching footstep was often sufficient to bring new floods of melody from some hidden covert. The opening may, the primrose disappearing into the grass, the glory of the chestnut blossom, added new depths to his song.

When the petals of the wild cherry drifted over the lawn like showers of snow, we stumbled upon their nest. It was placed in a rhododendron bush a few yards from the door. We watched it growing from a small airy cup of grasses and hair until the beautifully marbled eggs were laid. The bird sang as sweetly; but now he could not hide a note of anxiety that had crept unconsciously into his song. Often he came close to the avenue to chit and scold some one passing. About the end of June he ceased singing altogether. By this time the young were growing rapidly. From a grassy bank above the nest you could see them full-fledged, through the rhododendron flowers.

Whether the garden-warblers nested again that

summer we never discovered. After the song ceased, and the young birds could fly, they continued to chack in the bushes. Frequently they visited the garden for a share of fruit, which was never grudged them. Here other garden-warblers sometimes joined them; several pairs spent the summer with us, haunting the copses by the river or the shrubberies near the larger houses. Raspberries they are especially fond of, and when these were finished they appeared to leave us, passing out of our bird-life as silently as they had entered it in the earlier year.

Another season the male arrived again, punctual to the very day of the preceding year, the twelfth of May, and soon after a second bird. The place evidently suited them, and they were never disturbed. Ivy grew in a maze of green leaf which covered the ground and mounted high into the trees. The bushes that had been planted among them would make a very long list. They embraced such different varieties as box, spurge-laurel, mahonia, Persian honeysuckle, lilac, American raspberry, weigela, and wayfaring tree. The trees themselves were not too closely pruned. Near the roots of them a little thicket of twigs made abundant covert, and dead branches were often allowed to remain until the wind broke them. This total disregard for conventional appearance—out of set purpose—attracted the birds, and garden-warblers came with the rest.

The rose-beds which are overlooked by the windows of the summer-house radiate from a central plot where an iron maypole has been placed to support climbing plants. In the thicket of bushes nearer the doorway the wide variety of tree and shrub throughout the grounds seems to have been gathered into one limited space. From clustering rhododendrons a graceful birch rises high to show its drooping tresses, and round it there is a sweet confusion of bush and tree. Wildings whose seeds the birds may have carried from far cast long trailing stems of white and pink roses over the massed evergreens. They are as much if not more at home than the white garden blooms—old-fashioned roses of Provence—which struggle out of the tangled thicket beside them. This spot the birds love best of all, and the garden-warblers made their nest in it the second summer. Their young had left before we saw it, but all the season the birds frequented the bushes. Both of the old ones came close to the open door of the summer-house. Though shy they were very curious. Perching for a moment on a spray in front of the windows, they could be seen to good advantage, and it was easy to distinguish the more decided, almost russet-brown of the male bird's back. Here he sang his sweetest songs, though they were little better than snatches of melody, his nervous restlessness carried him so soon away. The song itself was

hurried, too hurried for such sweetness. Blackbird and thrush sat for an hour on the same bough, while their notes fluted and pealed on the air with a calm consciousness of power; those of the garden-warbler came as swiftly as if the pouring notes could not express fast enough the teeming thoughts that rose in the minstrel's mind.

When the young were stealing through the depths of the bushes to the anxious chitting of the old birds, the roses had reached their best. In the rose-beds before the door of the summer-house the display was very fine. There from many dwarf trees the bright blooms struck every note of colouring, from the dark velvety tints of Liberty and the Emperor du Maroc to such light shades as those of Mrs John Laing and La France. A crimson-rambler covered the maypole with large bunches of flower. *Tropæolum* vied with it for the higher place: a weed among the roses, this plant clung to them as the ivy did to the trees. Though we tried at times to exterminate it, the masses of bright scarlet flower were always beautiful, and they lingered late into the year.

Redstart, willow-wren, and flycatcher visited the lawn through the hot days of August for insects. When they all appeared to have left, stray birds came at intervals. It is very much easier to take notes of their arrival than of their departure. In spring they are easily seen among the leafless trees,

and their song draws attention, but as the season closes they slip silently and for most part invisibly among the leafy undergrowth. The last garden-warbler showed himself, among the bushes where the nest was, in the middle of September, more than a week after the rest of his kind had vanished.

HILL-FORTS.

THE Dale of the Leader lies in the midst of a system of ancient entrenchments which are a constant source of interest and marvel to the antiquary. On the northern side of the river, crowning spurs of the Lammermoors and points of vantage near them, are at least two well-marked groups of hill-forts. Others to the south of the Dale are more scattered and isolated, but this may be due to the nature of the ground, which through cultivation lends itself more to the destruction of such vestiges from man's past. Whether these formidable works were made on account of inter-tribal warfare or against invasion by distant peoples will always be a difficult problem to decide. Probably they served both purposes as the need arose. Some of them bear marks of having been temporary refuges from sudden attack; others have all the appearance of more permanent settlements.

There are types here of most of the different kinds of forts which have been found throughout the country. They are defended by large earthworks, embankments of stone and soil, or stone walls.

Some of the ramparts reach a great height, as much as sixteen feet in one or two cases. If we forget more destructive agencies, and allow for the wear and tear of nature alone, the subsidence of the centuries, and the filling up of the trenches, they must have stood much higher at the time of their occupation. For a primitive age, with few apparent implements to help, the forts represent a large amount of labour. When we take into account their often elaborate system of defences, the gigantic entrenchments one behind another that surrounded them, the traverses and towers that defended their gateways, the palisading that surmounted and strengthened the ramparts, the difficult positions in which so many stood, with the character of the assailants' weapons, such places must have formed a very secure retreat. The amount of work and skill needed to complete most of them point to a degree of energy and mental resource sufficient to place their builders far above primitive or savage man.

The country which they looked down upon was very different from that of to-day; breadths of wood and marsh where lie fertile fields. Our hills are practically treeless: their beauty lies in the soft rounded contour of their summits, their long brown and purple slopes, their grassy glens with clear wimpling streams. It is a beauty of suggestion as much as of actual vision, and therein lies an indefinite charm. But the pleasing effect of woodland

is left behind in the lower country. The few scattered clumps of trees, birch for most part, with an undergrowth of hazel and juniper on hill and in glen, accentuate the feeling of bareness and openness. It was not, however, always so. From these scanty remnants of natural wood, locally regarded as fragments of the old Caledonian Forest, the imagination may picture to itself the appearance at one time of large portions of the Lammermoors. Æneas Sylvius, the Papal Legate and future Pope, as the result of a visit to Scotland in 1435, writes of it as a land "generally void of trees." The description of our country on that side may have been the result of impressions formed soon after crossing the Border. The woods were often destroyed by devastating armies, and this was perhaps largely responsible for the woodless character of much of what he saw. But the Lammermoor mosses at least furnish ample evidence that, earlier than his day, large parts of the country were covered with almost continuous forest. From this timber growing all over them, in hollow and often on height, the hill tribes found abundance of palisades to make their entrenchments more secure: in one instance, if not more, a visible grooving along the middle of a rampart appears to indicate such a superstructure of wood.

Towards the upper part of the Dale a tributary stream flows from the hills to join the river on its left bank. On the heights along its course lie

the most interesting group of our hill-forts. The ground heaves up on either side of the stream in long, undulating lines—steep fields rising to fully a thousand feet as you approach the hills. Where the valley passes upward into two narrow glens penetrating the moors there stands as pleasant a homestead as one could wish to see. The house of the owner nestles at the foot of a sheltering hill. From the windows, looking down the valley, you get a very pleasing if not an extensive view of the Dale and the upland country on the other side.

The ascent to the fort behind the house is not a difficult one. A road winds round the hill to a point whence a few minutes' walk will take you to the summit. The prospect alone is worth a much greater effort,—ample breadth of moorland and hill on one side; lowland well-wooded and watered, with rich meadow and cultivated field on another. The extent of country visible from this, as from so many such forts, strengthens the impression that they were intended for a wider purpose than mere defence against the sudden raids of neighbouring tribes. A fuller acquaintance with systems of forts in other parts of the hills makes this almost certain. The old tribes driven from the low country by aggressors from the sea and the south made the heights and ridges of the Lammermoors their last and most effective line of defence. Most of their forts are found along the glens commanding old tracks and probable ways of approach, and on foot-hills and

outlying heights on the edge of the range. On the wildest and most inaccessible places of the Lammermoors there is little, if any, trace of them. All this points to the likely fact that the people who constructed many of them possessed at the same time the more fertile country at the base of the hills, and used them merely as a retreat in times of stress and danger.

Little external details force themselves upon our notice before we turn seriously to the closer study of what has brought us to the hill-top. A kestrel is almost sure to be hovering near, kept by our sudden appearance from one of his most successful preserves. As soon as we leave he will sail right over it, to circle and hover, and probably stoop. These graceful birds constantly visit the forts for the chance of mole or mouse in the long grass, which seems to grow more richly for man's early association with the place. There are often meadow-pipits about the ramparts, and the lark rises from the space inside, which is sometimes as large as a fair-sized meadow, to break overhead into song. Then there is a flora of the hill-fort. Most of the flowers are yellow-coloured—yellow rock-rose, yellow tormentil, yellow mountain violet, yellow hawkweeds, yellow buttercups, yellow bedstraw,—but there are also white and pink milfoils and others of different hues. Resting comfortably on the slope of one of the entrenchments, you are never far from the sweet scent of fragrant thyme.

At one place three well-marked embankments surround the fort, and there is a smaller parapet outside. At the point of danger they rise higher to make up for the want of natural incline. One of the two entrances has traces of traverses made to strengthen it against close attack. There are indications of internal divisions, lower lines and mounds of earth and stone,—one of them, it may have been, for cattle enclosed within the secure defences of the fort. Rounded heaps of stone, side by side, are evidently remains of ancient dwellings. On the northern side, between two of the ramparts, lies a well, the only one that remains in all our system of hill-forts to solve the problem of the supply of water for man and beast. Stones have fallen into it, leaving little room for any depth, and in the heat of summer there is only a trace of moisture. When in use, however, and very much deeper, the supply would never fail. Even now it lasts through most of the year, renewed by dew-fall as well as by shower. The well and the stone-huts appear to point to this one having been a more permanent settlement of the prehistoric people, a kind of fortified hill-village; but in many of the others these may have been destroyed. Through its position, in any case, the fort with the well appears the securest, and most likely to have been the central one of the system.

On almost every side are forts,—a strongly entrenched one with very high embankments close

at hand on the ridge to the right; much farther away, several on the heights to the south of the Dale. A very large one in another direction has evidently been placed where it is of set purpose. It lies close to the slope of an intervening hilly ridge; a little farther to the left and it would have been out of sight. There can be no doubt about part of the design in the minds of the builders: it was placed there so as to be in a line of communication with this one, but whether for friendly or unfriendly purposes is harder to say. Still another is within easy reach on the opposite side of the glen on the left,—a promontory fort on a height known as Wallace's Knowe. Here little artificial defence was needed on the side of the stream and a tributary where the hill falls steeply down; but a narrow neck that joins it to the higher ground has been defended by strong embankments. This one could not have stood alone,—it was an outpost meant to stem the first rush of attack, to harass an invader, or to watch the signs of his first approach, coming by way of the hills. More forts connected in some way with the main one may have been swept away by centuries of field-work.

Practically every vestige of definite time is lost in connection with them. Standing on the hill-top as we did in the autumn, among the ramparts and heaped-up stones of fallen homes, strange thoughts rose in the heart. Under the golden sunshine, in

the Dale uncut grain and fields in sheaf lay side by side. One almost heard the sound of the distant reaper, and through it all the busy activities of modern country life. From the harvest-fields the present appealed to the spirit. Nearer than these, by the side of the stream that flows to the river, was the field where so many cists were once found. They lay a short way beneath the surface, singly and in groups, each one containing human bones. The plough had destroyed some of them; but twenty were discovered after a three days' search, and there may be many still in the field. The mystery has never been solved: some of the bones lay extended at full length, others were contracted as if in a sitting position, some showed traces of having been burned. Every period of life, from infancy to old age, was represented in this ancient burial-place. In one cist the remains of a mother were found, with those of a babe upon her breast. From the hill-fort the eye rested on it, an ancient and nameless field of the dead. The harvest suggested man's struggle for food; the field the long dreamless sleep that unravels all his cares. Around were the hill-forts, symbols of that mysterious setting that encloses human life. The ages passed unconsciously into one another, as drops in the glen streams bickering and flowing endlessly down below. The spirit through its own thought was detached from time; it became difficult to say which was most real—the busy activity of the valley,

the field of unbroken rest and ended suffering, or the hillman who had left no other memory than the works that are a perpetual witness to the insecurity and bloodshed of his forgotten day. On the hill Periods and ages flowed on, and were for ever lost in the vast absorbing stream of time.

The fort was approached from the valley beneath by a protected road: it may have been palisaded like the ramparts above. You can follow it down to the homestead, a hollow track lying a foot or more below the surface of the hill. Two streams join in the valley, issuing from different glens. The hill itself lies between them, laved on either side by their waters—the last elevation on the high ground which separates the channels in which they flow. Across that on the left stands a terraced barrow, a short walk from the fort. A leader of note lies buried there. Part of his resting-place has been quarried, and the symmetry unfortunately broken. Some years ago two urns were found in the highest part of it, close to the surface,—one a food-urn with black soil-looking substance, and an instrument of hard sandstone that may have been used for sharpening the weapons of the dead man; the other with a quantity of calcined bones. There were more bones lying loosely in the chamber of stone. You can still pick out pieces of charcoal from the broken soil, some so little destroyed that the fibre of the wood may be seen. The remains of the old-world chief were cremated and interred

with rites of heathen sepulture. These things take us back a long way into the mist of years.

The smaller urn is beautifully shaped, and decorated on the exterior with a delicate pattern of zigzagging lines. Both of them are a good deal broken. They may be seen in the hospitable house at the foot of the hill. There we have examined them again and again, and sat discussing them with the friends within. The love of the owner for these treasures of antiquity makes itself manifest before you enter his dwelling. Against one of the walls has been placed an old sun-dial, and along the ground at the foot of another are laid ancient querns, stone-hammers, and other fragments of forgotten things. The struggle and tragedy of a bygone life wraps them about, the air is full of it; the silent hills—most of all in the evening twilight—seem struggling hard to keep the secrets of dreadful deeds.

Indoors there is a much finer collection of old-world relics, one to delight an antiquarian's heart. Flint arrows, some of them of perfect shape, smooth or serrated along their edges, are found in it. Beside them lie jagged spear-heads, capable in strong hands of inflicting ghastly wounds, with well-formed celts of the stone and bronze ages, gathered from the fields and the hill-slopes around. One day we heard a piece of curious information about some of the weapons. Those flint ones found in the vicinity of the house are mostly of a very light colour, while

the majority of such as are picked up from the fields on the opposite side of the Dale are equally dark. Is it a mere coincidence, extending only to those in the collection, or does it point to a little bit of old-world history? Sitting by the fireside and scanning them leisurely, with the pleasant talk of your hosts to add a more human interest to each one; fresh, too, from the fort, the barrow, and the collection by the doorway,—unimpressionable indeed must you be if you do not feel a new wonder and reverence for the days of a long-vanished past.

LONESOME MOORS.

IT is a walk of more than two miles to the shepherd's house, and beyond the house lie the lone and silence of the hills. Scorching sunshine filled the glen one day in early June, leaving scant place for shadow, and the oppressive glare was aggravated by the stillness and sultriness of a thundery atmosphere. The air rippled and throbbed visibly under it, forming what country people call a heat-mirage. All nature appeared to pant and feel the burden of the burning sun. The sheep sought those places where there was shadow, and, resting under shelter of a bank or a large stone, showed signs of extreme exhaustion. Their bodies rose and fell beneath the burden of a fleece which had reached its heaviest, and great gasps and sighs, almost human in their expressiveness, came from every side. In the lower country a very early summer, which set the newspapers searching for precedents, brought the wild roses into flower a month earlier than their time. Under its influence the hawthorn blossom turned rosy and fell before May was well out. One does

not often see it under northern skies, but this year the may blossom was really may, and the June roses came with June. In the glen the bracken-fronds hurried to uncoil themselves under the fervid power of the sunshine. A road followed the stream, dipping and falling with the rises and hollows of the hillside. On the opposite bank lateral cleughs which had cut their way down to the bed-rock, scarring the hill, found an outlet in the glen. Dark juniper bushes clad their slopes, darker against the vivid green of uncurling bracken and masses of male and female fern.

For all the quiet beauty of the scene, it was a relief to reach the shepherd's house. There we found other visitors before us. Visitors are never a source of embarrassment in these hill-shepherds' homes. All through summer the hostess appears to be expecting them every day, and she extends hospitality with a grace and want of fuss and apology that a society lady might envy. There is really no need, if there were any inclination, for excuses; one of the good genii of the Arabian nights might be always at hand to obey her behests. The table is loaded, and the constant marvel is how it can otherwise be done in a house so far removed from the dainties as well as most of the necessities of modern life. Shepherd hospitality, in its happy freedom and open-handedness, suggests traits and

habits of domestic life which are primitive and colonial rather than those of an older country.

Through the open doorway a pair of sandpipers make themselves heard piping loudly from the stream, and the call of the curlew comes from the hilly slope above it. Nature has made these quiet homes one with herself. They have grown a part of the glen, almost as much as the grey rocks by the stream. The spirit of the wild has cast her mantle over them. Here there is nothing but pastoral peace and pastoral trust,—the wildest and most reserved creatures appear to have entered into relations of confidence with man. The golden age might have come again; it would be no great surprise suddenly to hear the sweet music of the pipe of Pan. That is the first thought and the first impression produced by the place, with the sunshine falling on the hillside or glinting from the water. It is hard to realise that there can be another side. But even here, as in less-favoured places, the lower creatures war and prey among themselves every day. Nature, “red in tooth and claw,” makes life subsist on life, and tragedies are always taking place among the quiet of the hills. The relentless stoat hunts down his defenceless prey along the stream; these glens and wild moorlands with their loose stone-folds are one of his sanctuaries, from which no amount of trapping and shooting seems able to extirpate him. The

carrion-crow, like the spirit of evil, croaks his ominous note — a scourge and devourer of all weaker things. Strong-winged peregrines have struck down red grouse close to the shepherd's door, and poisonous adders lurk in the heath. Last winter a pair of rough-legged buzzards searched the glen for food, taking daily toll of mice and suchlike creatures, with an occasional rabbit and a weakly bird. The beautiful buzzards came so near the windows every day that the characteristic shades and markings of their plumage could be seen.

The house itself is very pleasantly situated. On every side are the hills, and it has been built where the rising ground shelters it from the coldest winds. Hardly whispering above their breath to-day, in wet weather the streams fill the glen day and night with the sound of rushing water. Near the cottage of the shepherd the murmur and flow of mountain rills reaches its loudest: it is surrounded by them on every side. No name could be more apt than that which has been given it—Glenburnie—the house of the glen of streams.

But the sun has westered while we have been enjoying shelter and hospitality, and the heat of day has given place to the mild coolness of evening. Some time is needed also for the rest of the walk, which embraces wellnigh twelve miles before the zigzag is completed that ends at the sheep-farm in another glen farther eastward among the hills.

So away up the stream, while curlews call and golden plovers pipe and wail on every hand. It is easy to trace the progress of nesting by the nature of their cries. Where there are eggs, the male birds still utter their long-drawn and more joyous calls high in the air, but the presence of young brings them very close, with anxious and plaintive notes. The glen is lonesome now, with nothing but an occasional fold under the lee of some sheltering height to suggest the existence of man. Feeding sheep have become so much a part of moor and hillside that they have practically lost all trace of human association. Everywhere they are to be seen, down in the hollows, dotting the rising slopes, the lambs conspicuous beside their mothers from their snowy-white fleeces. The sheep-farm which owns the surrounding moorland extends over thousands of acres of hill pasture. It recalls one of the sheep-runs of countries where a man might ride many a mile to survey his numerous flocks.

Red scaurs glow from the side of the streams, turning rosy pink in the evening sunshine. They are a common feature of our rounded hills, taking the place of steep cliffs and rugged crags in other mountainous districts. Their colour, to one who knows anything of geology, indicates their general character at once. These hills at one time were more rugged and grand, and much loftier as well; but the older red sandstone which crowned them has been almost entirely denuded, showing now

only in the scaurs, along the streams, and over a shallow surface of moor and hill. A little way down lies the flintier framework of graywuacke rock, which is forcing its way with the passage of centuries everywhere through what is left of the sandstone. The sunshine brings out all the tints of the hill, from the rosy hues of the scaur, through the deep - brown velvet of acres of heath, to the fresh green of bracken fern. Fresh green though the bracken be, before the leaves have fully spread, it does not produce such a vivid effect of rich colour as the blaeberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), which clothes whole hill-slopes with great breadths of living green leaf. When you get closer, under these leaves are pink rounded cups of flowers that will soon begin to form the berry. The birds must enjoy a wide-spread feast. Here you might revel for years, if a season's crop could only be made to last so long, among luscious and well-flavoured blaebERRIES ; now it is the beautiful green of the leaf that appeals to another sense. There are one or two bushes also of the crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), but it is not such a common plant on our moors. The cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*) is almost unknown.

Climbing a shoulder of the upland, hills called laws rise on every side—Hog Law, Seenes Law, Crib Law, Lammer Law, the two Hart Laws, and others,—we are on South Hart Law. Not a single tree is within sight on the wide moorland ; but it is likely glen and hills were thickly wooded when

Hunt and the Hart Laws got their names. The red deer is unknown now, but these and names such as Hartside and Hindsidehill carry the thoughts back to days when hart and hind provided a royal chase. Almost as rare in the Border-land is the lithe, graceful roedeer, and yet such names as Raecleuch show that it, too, once abounded. On Hunt Law fancy sees the chase begin, and here or on the other Hart Law a noble stag, rounding to his lair among the bracken, being pulled down. Two hills have provided for him a lasting monument.

From the highest points around larks rise into the evening sky. Their song rains down pleasantly on the ear. On this side the skyline, where the hills fall away to a valley in a different part of the country, is a meadow of natural grasses and blaeberry leaf showing a long way off among the heather. There is no sign of cultivation; yet it is difficult to resist the thought that man once tilled it after some fashion. A meadow of many acres among the deep brown of the heather with its feeding sheep, as fair and fresh to look upon as some green holm by a river. So far-away and so lonesome, it comes on the mind as a surprise. Addington Rig the place is called, and the meadow dates perhaps from the time when the crofting community came thus far in summer into the hills. Human beings must have loved this spot in their day, loved it better for its remoteness among the

moorland solitudes, and Nature has preserved the love of past centuries by keeping its memory green. Passing through it, you find wiry grasses and bents, mingled with abundant blaeberry leafage. Whatever the origin of the extensive meadow among the brown, untamed wildness of the moors, the place is pleasant to look upon, and pleasanter for its suggestions of kindred life. No matter that these may have come from other centuries, human years and generations have no place among the hills.

But what impulse carried the footsteps so far as the boundary fence, where the hill descends to a strange glen? The sun was very close to the horizon, and the shadow reached ominously far over the moor. On the summit of one Hart Law, prudence, that commonplace mentor, said, Turn to the right and homeward. On the summit of another it went on repeating commonplaces about the lateness of the day and the increasing length of the road. What impulse was it, then, that kept the steps making for the distant fence? Times and again it was almost overborne, but times and again it kept getting its own way. It was something outside and apart from the will, part of that mysterious force which carries one life to heights of success and another to depths of shame and disaster. There it was, asserting itself without any definite purpose, unless that of doggedly seeing the thing through. But what was the strange bird-note that broke on

the stillness? There it is again, somewhere near at hand. Not the cry of a plover certainly, though there are so many about. The ground is soft in places, and in wet weather must be difficult to traverse: there are traces of shallow morasses and hags all around on a lofty tableland of upper moor. The spot is one of the remotest and loneliest of all the remote Lammermoors. It is a place where one might chance on something out of the common rut. Almost without knowing it, the lips call hush to thoughts which here are as loud as spoken words. There the sound comes again! Is it the note of a dotterel? The old gamekeeper told me before he died he had come on a nesting-place of dotterel, forty years ago, somewhere near on these moors, and that he had shot a young bird. Here are his dotterel sure enough! Chee! Chee! Chee! Tseep! Cheep! and a small, brownish, snipe-like bird rose into the air. Round and round he circled, always returning to the intruder with plaintive calls. Farther on another bird answered him from the ground with a soft, chirruping note. This one allowed of a very close approach. The beautiful back, orange and brown, the black splash on the light breast, solved the matter beyond the possibility of doubt. The old gamekeeper's dotterel—with all his wide knowledge of birds he had hardly seen them before—were in sooth dunlin. Here they had been nesting undisturbed all these years, or, what is

more likely, he had found them on another part of the hills. A second pair rose quite near, and more answered them from different parts of the benty moor. Mounting into the air, they called Tchurr-urr-urr to one another, flying as sandpipers do in their love-making season, with outstretched, almost motionless wings, then vibrating them rapidly, to glide in lines and circles of steady and graceful flight again. There had been something in the impulse after all. Here was a new nesting record for these hills, for the dunlin were in summer plumage, and certainly nesting. The standard ornithological work on the birds of the county mentions one shot on the hills near, but admits that "there is no record of the nest of the dunlin having been found in it." If testimony were needed, surely this is sufficient, to the lonesomeness and undisturbed quiet of large reaches of the Lammermoors.

On some parts of the coast these birds may be seen any winter's day in thousands, going through their rapid evolutions of flight, a gleam of silver when their breasts are all in sight, but a brown cloud when they turn as one bird again. But the great flocks of dunlin by the sea-shore have almost all nested in the far North. Here, however, was a colony of nesting dunlin which would later find their way to some southern coast. There was something in the impulse after all, though it had

promised nothing more than getting through to the farther fence. The birds were little, if at all, disturbed; in such an early season every pair had probably young. It was pleasant to listen to their soft notes in the deepening stillness, and to turn and watch their flight until the descent into a hollow hid them from sight.

A CYCLE OF SONG.

IN the second week of June a blackcap broke into song from the leafage above the avenue. For some days earlier he had been heard in other places, but the minstrel himself was always invisible. This day after singing for some time he flew down to the garden wall. As he perched for a moment on a copestone, the pale slaty-brown of the back and the jet-black glistening head were very conspicuous. But he was too restless to stay long in any place. Returning to the trees, he sang again from a hidden branch among the June leaves. The song was not fuller than that of the garden-warbler, but it appeared richer, more finished and more artistic. There was not the same tendency to hurry, nor the harsh note that breaks so often into the other bird's melody. Until that day we had thought the garden-warbler our queen of song, but now she was dethroned by the blackcap. Both had been heard elsewhere and in full voice before, but there had never been an opportunity to make a satisfactory comparison. Here in the same setting of green leaf, beside the same beds of

roses, the blackcap fairly out-sang the garden-warbler. He had all the advantages of a new singer, and for a time the heart had no ear for any other. It was not that these were silent—mellow-voiced blackbird and ringing thrush or tree-pipit mounting from some branch into the air, to descend again with outspread wings in a flood of melody. From the underwood the wren sang his clear-voiced lyric, and for such a small bird the volume was marvellous. While you stood near, the whole air appeared to vibrate with the force of the sound-waves.

It was chaffinch-time, and three or four of these birds were singing within a short distance of one another: there had been a great deal of fighting for nesting-places earlier in the year. No rival does the chaffinch tolerate in what he has mapped out as his own domain. He is as pugnacious in the nesting-time as any redbreast, and will pursue another of his own kind relentlessly from branch to branch until he has driven him away. Now each pair had settled down to their own part of the grounds, and the male bird guarded his boundaries as jealously as ever did any nation its threatened territory. A tree or a bush might make all the difference; these were his recognised landmarks, and any other chaffinch that crossed them was immediately attacked. Each from his own domain filled the air with a rapid, babbling carol of song. In the heat of summer these notes falling on the

ear made one feel cooler, just as it feels cooler to listen to the murmuring sound of a stream. The song of the chaffinch had the same effect in its own way. There was plenty of passion in his voice, though it sounded more silvery, more self-possessed than that of a warbler. For all that, I had never quite realised until then how much the song of the willow-wren resembled that of the chaffinch. It was not nearly so strong nor so full-voiced; then where that of the chaffinch rose to its loudest, the song of the willow-wren died trembling away. With these differences there was a wonderful resemblance between them, especially in the earlier notes. Any one listening closely to the two in song near to one another will recognise this resemblance at once.

All the other birds were in splendid voice. Blackbird and thrush had been comparatively silent for a time, while their thoughts were occupied with the cares of their first broods. Now the hen birds were sitting a second time, and the males poured forth their richest strains again. They were more invisible in the closing leaves, but the song was as sweet as ever. Their hearts brimmed over with so much melody that they often sang in the air as they flew from tree to tree, as well as among the branches, until the broad shield of the full moon had risen some way above the horizon. One thrush possessed a loud clarion note, which he loved to repeat several times in his song, so rapidly that it was difficult

to count the number. Tu-te, tu-te, tu-te,—these staves were used as a skilful musician repeats at intervals some entrancing cadence that captivates every listening heart. In clear-voiced execution of note, in oft-repeated runs and perfectly articulated trills, withal in the power to impress his notes upon the memory, the thrush does not yield to the nightingale herself. Where both are found, no other bird is so frequently mistaken by people for the nightingale as the loud and sweet-voiced thrush.

With the approach of evening the merle asserted his heaven-born powers, but he does not continue his song quite so late as the thrush. He sings best when the day passes quietly into the gloaming, and the hare is stealing down from the upland to the sweet meadow-grasses. His vesper song varies with the lengthening day, growing later towards midsummer. The rapidly descending sun regulates it, for a little before and after sunset his fluty note dominates every other song. From hedgerow and thicket, from woodland or solitary tree, the notes come softly over the hushed landscape. This blackbird hour is the pleasantest time of all the day. When it is over the thrush still carols loudly, but the world is poorer for the silence of the blackbird's song.

Dawn rather than evening is the best time to hear their voices when the day reaches its longest: in the coolness and freshness of a dewy morning, then, they are as full of melody and vigour as in spring.

After losing them in hot, rainless weather, birds regain their powers of voice as soon as showers come. Then and in the clear shining which follows the rain they rise to their loudest and best. In an otherwise sultry and unclouded June we had a short interval or two of wet days, and the grateful moisture renewed their powers of song as they freshened and renewed the leaves.

So there was plenty of bird-melody when the blackcap broke into voice in the avenue trees, but his notes seemed to surpass them all. For the time one felt no inclination to listen to other birds : they were only an accompaniment while this new sweet singer poured forth his dulcet strains. Though far from a common bird, blackcaps had shown themselves before at fruit-time. Old and young seemed to know the very day when the red-currant bushes would hang their juicy clusters on the wall, but earlier in the season they never appeared. In previous years garden-warblers had their nest in one of the rhododendron coverts; this one, the male came and sang but did not stay. Some authorities say that the two birds do not usually nest close to one another. Be that as it may, the garden-warbler left soon after the blackcap began to sing. That there was a nest of the latter in time, deep somewhere amid the leafage of a bush, there could be no doubt. We never found it, but later in the season the two birds were often heard chit-chatting to each other. In June the

cinnamon-headed female must have been sitting, while the male from the trees above sang such exquisite strains.

The recognised love-time produces its greatest fulness and melody, but every season has its own song. Oppressive heat and excessive cold are the only conditions which affect it to any great extent, stifling or freezing the voice of melody in the choristers' throats. There are rises and falls in the song-tide under these weather conditions all through the year. Yet practically at any time the listener will hear a stray note or two. When the general chorus is silent, here and there a voice will break forth, not always sweet in itself, but never lacking the sweetness of suggestion and memory. If one were to draw up a calendar of birds' song over three or four years, diligent attention would make it possible to find a song for every day. One season extremes of temperature might lead to complete silence on certain days, but in other years every one of them would have their own voice.

Some birds break into song long after one has ceased to expect it. The blackcap was singing again on the tenth of July. By that time blackbird and thrush had almost lapsed into silence. The few staves which they sang were short and broken, without any life and abandon. The golden-billed blackbird rarely fluted, and then it was only low as in a dream,

from the cover of the bushes. Among the warblers most of the sweetest voices continue in song for the shortest period. By mid-July, but for the white-throat in a roadside hedge, or a sedge-warbler from the bank of the stream, they are almost quite silent. Nature is changing her minstrelsy now from the song of birds to the increasing hum of insect life.

Yet even amid the heat of August—with the exception of severe wintry weather, the most silent time of the year—some birds continue in voice, and their notes make a greater appeal for the general silence. The greenfinch is the songster of the closing summer. He breezes and trills in the hottest days, when other birds are resting languidly in deeper shade. Hour by hour at noon-day, as well as morning and evening, bird breezes to bird, and one sometimes rises wantoning into the air as in spring, with a wonderful fulness of song. Greenfinch and yellow-hammer fill up the silent time of the year, until the redbreast has found his autumn notes. But one by one they also lapse into silence as the sad-voiced melody of harvest-time begins to increase. The redbreast is as much the singer of the fading leaf as the thrush is that of the leafless branch in spring, or the blackbird of budding foliage and opening flower. He fills up the pauses of song with a sweet, full-throated, spiritual carol, that bears the heart away as on wings.

In later autumn, when the redbreast is singing his loudest, an aftermath of other bird melody rises on every side. From meadow and upland lark after lark mounts, singing into the clear blue sky. Their notes do not have the fulness and light-heartedness of spring-time, and yet there is a striking variety and compass in them. From the trees a thrush sometimes pipes, and a chaffinch sings his bright cheery melody. But there is the consciousness of effort in this autumn song; it does not flow from the singers' hearts like that of spring. Neither is it so satisfying. There is a strange feeling of emptiness in Nature which the bird's note increases, as when some one speaks in a large, empty temple. A number of birds may be singing, but the heart feels great, vacant, silent interspaces between them. This may be noticed as early as the close of summer, when the fullest outburst has died away. Along every roadside yellow-hammers are always singing, often three or four birds within hearing at once. A reed-bunting, without ceasing, ching-chings the merest apology of a song from the stream. Among the fields a corn-bunting may be heard, and the greenfinch breezes all day long. One is never out of hearing of some of these later minstrels, and yet their songs do not fill the ear. They are but voices crying in the wilderness. Even when the autumn melody of the redbreast is at its richest, the heart is conscious of this emptiness.

Perhaps the little minstrel himself feels it, and the fact gives a deeper sadness and a more conscious sense of loneliness to his notes.

As the increasing sunshine affects the first and fullest period of song—the real love-song of the year,—biting winds and approaching storms silence the later bird voices. Not quite all of them; still from the top of some leafless bush the hedge-sparrow continues to welcome a stray sunbeam, and, hardiest of all, the common wren makes the air vibrate as in summer with the loud staves of her song. But there come intervals when even they are silent. Then the heart would miss one of the sweetest sources of melody which Nature provides, were it not for the starling. He hardly appears to feel the pinch of the keenest cold. All through summer he was listening and storing up the minstrelsy of grove and field and hill. Now he is a perfect bird-orchestra in himself, as from some naked tree he revives the dead melodies of summer. If you listen, it is possible to tell from his notes the bird-musicians of a country, even those that may be at the time thousands of miles away.

Not snatches of song alone, but the most difficult notes and the different calls of other birds, does the starling reproduce. By associations of sound he brings fields of wide pasture-land, miles of brown rolling moor, and the sea-waves dashing the cliffs with their spray, into the mind, when

the ground is white with snow. Sitting for hours flecking his wings as he whistles, the starling fills up the longest and most silent pause of the year. Severe storms send almost every thrush away from our uplands, the hardy wren herself disappears from the neighbourhood of the houses. Redbreast and hedge-sparrow come shivering to the doors, piping plaintively for a morsel of food. They have no heart for sweeter sounds,—in winter they are at best but intermittent voices. It is to the starling that we owe the real melody of those silent days, when man wraps himself more closely from the biting blast, and all Nature feels a-cold.

SUMMER SHIELINGS.

THE shepherds were the first to mention their existence. They had come across foundations of buildings which they could not understand, far in the hills. One said there were heaps of earth and stone near the burn at a place called Todholes, "jest like auld hooses." He had often passed them on the edge of his ground, alongside the boundary fence; but few others knew anything about them. The fact that there were several of these foundations together made the information more interesting. As soon as an opportunity came they were visited, though they lay a long way from any habited house. It is three miles to the sheep-farm at the Dale-end of the glen, and a six-mile walk, most of it over rugged hill ground, before one reaches the place of the shielings.

That is merely a detail, however, to one who loves the open air. If one care for the creatures of the wild besides, there is no end to the interest. The glen with its windings, its high slopes, and its rocky stream might well be the entrance to some enchanted spot, and its fascination never stale.

Reach after reach breaks on the eye, as the burn twines and meanders, drawing the footsteps on. The stillness of the glen falls on the heart, and Nature's peace steals over the soul. Two miles from the end of it stands a shepherd's house. Once a home of happy families, now, save a shepherd in the lambing season, or a ditcher busy with his spade among the moors for a week or two in summer, no one occupies it. Yet the house is in good preservation, and the position, like so many of the sites of these glen-houses, has been chosen with greatest care. Shelter and a measure of convenience were probably two considerations in the choice, but whether intentionally or unintentionally, a sweeter spot could hardly have been alighted upon.

With no family in the house, this is one of the most solitary of our glens. Merlin hawks took advantage of the solitude to make their nest in the heather. For years the old birds were destroyed, and still new ones came, the place suited them so well, until constant persecution made nesting impossible: only a stray bird visits it now, but the slightest measure of protection would speedily bring merlins back again. Here also comes the peregrine, as you may see by the remains of a red grouse killed and plucked by the stream. These birds really do little harm compared with the carrion-crow, the herring and black-backed gulls. The crow flies along the slopes above the stream carefully scanning the ground; he is a terror to the hill-birds in the nest-

ing season. Many an egg-shell does the shepherd find which has been pierced by his cruel bill. Detested, shot, trapped, the carrion-crow keeps enough of his kind alive to do a great deal of destruction. Herring-gulls are as bad in their own way, and so is the black-back, but fortunately they do not haunt the moor with the persistence of the crow. Passing up the glen, I came upon a trap placed by the gamekeeper on the shelf of a little slope. A dead herring-gull, with broken leg, caught the attention first, and then the glossy sheen of a carrion's body some feet above it. The crow was still in the trap, which was securely fastened to the ground, with a white Alpine hare laid for a bait beside it. Dead and stiff as he was, the black carrion-crow suggested cunning and mischief, and the powerful pickaxe beak of the gull, for all his lovely plumage, aggressive and merciless destruction. It was hard to pity them, though Nature must have her checks to keep the constant increase of any one kind of her creatures within due bounds.

There are probably more pairs of ring-ouzels in this glen than anywhere round about. The wild, sweet song of the male bird is in perfect unison with the solitude of the scene. Some of his notes are breezy and thrush-like, repeated in the same way, but they want the mellowness of the blackbird's. Pleasant it is to listen to the ring-ouzel's song, while the bird sits on a stone on the slope above, the white gorget on his breast shining in the

sun. I have seen the loose-built nest in a crevice of the hillside, half-hidden by heather stems, with its greenish speckled eggs, beside the empty shepherd's house. The blackbird shares the glen on apparently friendly terms with the white-throated ouzel. His fluty song does not harmonise with the solitude in the same way; among the hills he wants the leafage that is its natural background. The sweet notes almost startle one, though they fall with the same mellowness here as in the Dale. There is something very human about his song, something that recalls the vox humana of a rich-toned instrument, or a voice made sweet and touching by experience which has come through much sorrow. Something, too, very suggestive of life and its depths, and here you are so far away from man. Wild duck nest in the heather, and then lead their young after two or three days to the stream. They thrive best, though so much at home in water, if not taken to it too soon. The stock-dove makes its nest in one of the low scaurs along the burn. This summer a pair had their two snow-white eggs in a crevice of the rock, covered by spreading blaeberry and heather. The common wren sings far up the glen, and dipper, sandpiper, redshank, and pied wagtail are other birds of its stream.

More than once have I visited the shielings, passing the lonely house of former shepherds, and along the hill-burn's Prattling course, alone or with a

friend. Last day it was in company with a kindred spirit, one steeped in the lore of the hills, familiar for many years with the name and character of every little height and stream, a student as well as a close observer of Nature and the past. A new light was thrown on everything, and new things came to light through his eyes. Stepping up the glen, we turned aside at one point to see a large and strange collection of stones, gathered on a ridge above, evidently by man. What purpose they had served is hard to tell—whether gathered for burial-cairn or strange dwelling. The name given them of Jock's Walls shows at least their connection with man, and the slope where they are is known as Jock's Rig. Beyond the stones and the ridge is Jock's Burn; but who he was, living remote among the hills, is one of the unsolved mysteries of the past.

Walking on, we reached the foundations of the shielings—seven in all—on a dry bank several feet above the level of the stream. One stood apart from the others, lower down, separated by a tributary rill, and may have been used for a special purpose. All the doors lay to the east or the south-east, and some of the dwellings had varied slightly in size. One that was fairly typical of the rest measured five yards in length by four in breadth. A large stone in the interior of one shieling close to a wall probably served the purpose of a hearth. The doors must have been low as well as narrow, and the house itself of the rudest description. At night the inmates

slept on heather beds, the deep, sound, full-chested slumber of the open air and the hills. Hither the young women of a crofting community eight miles away in the Dale came with their flocks in the summer-time to pasture them and make cheese. Before the day of large sheep-farms and winter grazing the pasture around yielded a choice supply of food, and the cattle of the crofter soon lost the leanness of the long winter. The place had been chosen, too, like the site of the shepherds' homes, with a view to shelter, for round it on the north and other sides rose a high ridge of moorland; it nestled cosily in a basin among the hills. For three or four months the temporary tenants occupied the houses, enjoying to the full, amid bracing moorland air, the sweet of the year.

Before reaching the shielings we had gone over the Summer Rig—six hundred acres or thereabout, which must have been a favourite piece of pasture. On the side of it, at the top of a patch of vivid green, lay Katie's Well. The heart wove about her a happy romance of the past, and made her one of the central figures of that band of bright-hearted, laughing girls who once lived in the shielings. On the summit of the Rig was a peat-moss, where they spent part of the day in lightsome toil. Firm, dark peat could still be seen, in which the turfer's spade had once been at work, but most of the cuttings had filled again with the slow accumulation and growth of years. We pushed sticks up to their

heads into this accumulation: the first workers must have come to the place, at least, two or three centuries ago. Strong had the carts been which conveyed the peats from such a remote and difficult spot. There was a choice of two tracks, one straight down the glen, and the other by a herring road higher on the hill. Likely enough, most of these peats were carried, as they are still in remote parts of the country, part at any rate of the way, on sturdy panniered ponies, if not by women.

The place of the shielings was a real “saeter heim,” like those which the traveller comes across in Norway or in Switzerland. One does not need to go so far to learn the general nature and purpose of these summer homes. My friend was familiar with them from a visit to just such another place as this in the island of Lewis, and could piece many of the details together, making the dead past of the old foundations live again. He left for a time to look at some recent work being done for him, leaving one alone with the past. A life to be desired, almost envied, must the life of these shielings have been. Youth with its blithesomeness of heart, and the freedom of the hills! There was no suggestion of sadness about the turf-heaps and the projecting stones of the ruined dwellings. They belonged to summer and the happiest age of light-hearted womanhood. If sorrows came thus far among the hills, time has buried them, and left nothing but echoes of the lilt and light laughter behind. The

sun glancing from the babbling stream, the bleat of the snipe, the song of larks and other birds, all breathed a spirit of gladness, and one could not help seeing the past through it. Beautiful but lonely in the light of the sunshine! Have you noticed how the light which reveals so many things makes visible the loneliness of a lonely place? Let the sun shine in his brightness, revealing every hidden spot, to bring home this side to the thoughts. I have never felt the loneliness of a solitary place so much as in bright sunshine.

Bare rounded outline shows on every side, with nothing higher than bents and heather to hide it. There is a wonderful fascination about this aspect of Nature. Unbroken ridges and swelling upland have a beauty that a single tree would destroy. Against the evening afterglow the hills stand out as if some divine pencil had traced them. Bare outline, rounding itself into hill or stretched out as a line along a celestial ruler, has all the purity and force of an aspiration. There is a natural sublimity of bare outline entirely apart from trees. Woodland has a charm peculiarly its own, and clothes a country with beauty, yet give me some places, and especially upland, without a single tree. Let the earth show the symmetry of her form through the short sward which hardly conceals it. There is a beauty of rounded outline and unclothed form which is one of the finest charms of our Border hills.

One would like to stay and see it all again, as it has so often been seen before. It would be a joy to wait among the shielings until the soft, orange rays of the evening sunshine had changed to lights which fill the valleys and flush the heights with purple and rosy tints. How this hollow would fill with their radiance, like a cup full to the brim of purest wine, changing its tint from orange to rosy and purple! The liquor of the sun mounts the hills and pours over on every side. Feeding sheep on the hillside seem the creatures of a dream. He who has not watched these evening lights on moor and upland does not know the infinite tenderness in the heart of Nature. The maids of the shielings could see them, night after night, at the close of a bright summer day, as they waited by the door until the last glow faded like a crown of gold from the topmost height. They could see the pearly dawn lighting the hill-tops as they went each morning to their bath in the stream. It was part of their higher education, for new depths seen in Nature are the revelation of new depths in the heart. One would like to witness it all again, were it not for being benighted on the hill. To-night it is more than time to go, for we have some interesting places still to see on our way across the upper moor.

LAMMERMOOR HERDS.

ON a dull day a ray of sunshine falling on a distant spot rapidly brings out its characteristic hues. Colour and sunshine answer to one another almost as much as light and shadow, and when the sunshine passes, colour fades rapidly into the neutral tints of the clouded landscape around. The intervention of but a temporary shadow will reveal this; an eye is as much dependent on light as the photographic plate. The beam that fixes form and detail on the one, impresses colour on the other. Colour is the creation of the sunshine, and as fast as darkness falls, the landscape passes into the colourlessness of night. But nowhere is the connection between light and living colour more apparent than among the hills. There everything appears to live in the sunshine—the wide moor with its lichenèd stones throbbing through the heat-haze, the stream in the glen sparkling and dancing in the warm beams. This effect of light and shadow made itself felt one day as we crossed the moors high above the Dale. The sun had burned his way through the cloudy veil of morning. On every side

the clouds withdrew; breaking into fragments and drifting like icebergs in a warm sea, most of them melted and disappeared rapidly into the blue. Glen and height glowed in the sun's triumphant rays with new radiance and life.

It was the season of the heather bloom. On every side rolled an ocean of amethyst, rising into billowy height or falling into deep hollow. The vision travelled over it, resting for a time on an island of refreshing green bracken and rushes, to set sail again over a purple sea. The wild flowers of the moor were lost in it—blue harebell and yellow hawkweed. Close at hand they stood out better, but a little way off they disappeared entirely into the autumn tint of the moor. So strong was it that it overpowered every other hue as the sunshine hides an earthly light. Even the islands of bracken, so vividly green close to the eye, were as invisible as the wild flowers in the distance. The mind steeped in it through the gateway of vision, unconsciously saw everything under the influence of the predominant colour. Both humble- and honey-bee droned and hummed over it or gathered its rich brown honey; large flies buzzed from bell to bell. At a short distance they too disappeared in the radiant light. Looking into the heath bloom, one could distinguish various shades of purple. A slight breeze blowing the bells appreciably altered the depth of the tint, so did the faintest shadow, and each plant had its own individual hue. You noticed

this in the millions of heath-bells close at hand, but farther away they all combined to form one rich colour. Royal purple fresh from the dye-vats of the sun, the thoughts rested on it with an almost sensuous delight.

Curlew and golden plover had left the hills to the red grouse and the sportsman ; the larks had ceased to fill the air with song. A stray bird of one kind or another rose from the moor at far intervals, but the crowd had entirely gone. The red grouse were quite silent ; morning and evening is the best time to hear the crow of the moorcock and the pleasant answer of the hen. Very few were seen ; deep in the long heather they sought some shadow from the burning sun. The moor felt strange without the wild, eerie, but pleasant calls of the earlier birds ; it appeared almost as desolate as a house without people. Though the sunshine fell so generously on heath and bracken, grey stone and laughing stream, the stillness produced a feeling that was almost one of awe. The very fact that the sun shone so brightly made the heart naturally look for sounds of joyous life.

In a quiet hollow of the glen two shepherds' houses nestled close to one another for companionship. Over the upper one a large number of twittering martins were flying, and their nests filled every available space under the broad eaves. Close to the house two tributaries unite to form the stream of the lower glen. This was not the end of the journey,

however, but another shepherd's cot at some distance along the burn on the left. There is a shorter way over a rushy meadow, and by a soft wet path through the heather. After following it for a time we saw the smoke of the house rising against a hill. Surely this must be the loneliest place that ever man inhabited. On a bank of the stream rising ground shelters the cottage on two sides, but the northern blast coming down the hollow howls wildly about it. The place had needs be strong, and so it is, with its two rooms, compact, square-shaped, presenting a solid front on every side to the storm. Compact, strong, and very comfortable when you are inside. In order to reach it we had to cross the stream on rough, rounded, slippery stepping-stones, the old sheep-bridge had grown so frail. The garden in front lay mostly in grass, with the remains of currant-bushes against a loose stone wall. Some elder trees along one side, a stunted willow, two lilacs which had been covered with flower in summer, a rowan twenty feet high,—otherwise the scene is perfectly treeless. The Alpine hare comes to a stell beside the garden for hay spread for the sheep in winter. The garden wall is a haunt of the wheatear, and in spring a pair have their nest among its stones.

Away from every neighbour, lonely beyond words, few are its visitors, and fewer still the people who stumble upon it in their wanderings over the hills. Perchance a fisherman following the stream so far,

comes to the house once in a season. Lonely, and yet touched with that charm of restful solitude which appeals to the imagination. A lodging-place in the wilderness, like Shelley's solitary island in the sea, where weary ones could shut upon their retreat the flood-gates of the world. In summer, at least, such a place might be a perfect Arcady, as near to Eden as one could ever hope to find on earth. Day and night the chattering burn sings its way past the garden. Overhead in the spring-time the snipe makes his drumming note. Curlew and plover fill the day with their wild but pleasant cries. The moorcock takes little flights upward into the soft golden light of evening to cock tenderly to his mate among the heather. At other seasons the stillness is broken only by the bleat of the sheep and the soft rush of the stream. Where could one find better change for tired body or overtaxed brain than the peace and the pure sunny air of this blissful spot! Even winter has its own charm, when the shepherd, his day's work done, sits by the bright peat-fire with an absorbing book, while the wind moans and the drift is hurled against the wall.

As fine a race of men as are anywhere to be found live in these solitary Lammermoor homes. No meanness, no insincerity, no petty selfishness about their straight, honest look. They are men of a sturdy independence of character, men also of reflection and close observation, as you might expect those to be who spend so much of life alone

and in such constant communion with Nature. The very fact that they have to act continually on their own initiative, makes them resourceful above most of the other toilers of the country. It is my privilege to be able to speak of them from close experience, from the most friendly relations, from pleasant days spent with them on the moors and happy nights passed under their hospitable roofs. Little wonder the world looks back with longing to the shepherd-age, there is so much in the life that appeals to the heart.

Many of them are wide readers: in winter their work allows them large margins of time, and wisely they spend it among books. One reads and studies philosophy; had it been his lot, at the university his name would have been found very high in the Honours list. Kant and Hegel are plain fare to him. Out of a library, on one visit he took Darwin, Hume, and Josephus to read. Another is fond of history, and has a wonderful knowledge of Covenanting times. Carving and fretwork are a hobby with some, and in a neighbouring parish two shepherds gave lessons one winter to the young men of the community. For information in the characteristic features, the natural history, or even the antiquarian associations of moor and hill, there are few who can give facts so interesting and precise as the shepherds. They are men of imagination, too, under the stimulating influence of the scenes amid which they spend their daily life. One

described a snow-scene on the day after a storm, the sunlight falling on dazzling white billows of drifted snow, with a power which a graphic pen might have envied. Of course it would be one-sided to give the impression that there are not unworthy members, but the elevating influences of the life make these an exceedingly small proportion of their class.

The surest way to a shepherd's regard is through a real interest in his work. No one is more responsive to a sympathetic listener; all his conversation shows his pride in his calling. To us short-sighted denizens of the lowlands, there is no appreciable individuality in the different units of a flock of sheep. As like as two sheep is pretty much the same thing as that other criterion of perfect resemblance, as like as two peas. But that is only because we know so little about the matter. We look at sheep with an unrecognising stare; as soon as one disappears among the rest it is lost for all purposes of recognition almost as much as a drop of water in a pool. But some people have a rare gift of recognising and remembering individual sheep; one who kept flocks said that he could recall their faces better than those of people. Shepherds declare that it is a gift which everyone of themselves does not possess. Gift or not, it seems a marvellous power, and stories are told of people who can recognise the same sheep by their features or face-marks after two or three years.

As you walk with the shepherd over the hill-pasture, he will tell you many interesting facts about his sheep. All he tends are known as a hirsel, which may embrace a good many scores. Those which compose it do not mix indiscriminately: different parts of the hill have their own sheep—each lot forming a heft or cut—which keep as closely to their recognised ground as the dogs of Constantinople once did to their own streets. From a fence to a burn may be the ground of one heft, while another occupies part of the hillside beyond it. He speaks of them—there may be fifty sheep—as hefted to that reach of ground, and for years they keep to it. He can tell you where they are likely to be found on their separate hefts at any hour of the day. Every morning they feed down the hill to what he calls the water-gate. From the streams they move slowly up the slope again, browsing as they go, and at night each heft of sheep is found at the highest point of its own ground. According to some people, the habit is the result of a hereditary tendency from the time when sheep found greater safety there from fierce creatures which have long since disappeared from the wild life of the country. More likely they seek the highest part of their ground as being dryer and more healthy to rest upon through the night.

If you take the shepherd's advice, you will always follow a sheep-track along the slope of the glen or

up the hill. It makes the easiest pathway, for sheep in their own way are the best road-engineers in the world. They have been taught by Nature herself, and for some things man might profitably go to school with them. There is no waste of energy in following a sheep-track; it goes along the line of least resistance, and takes advantage of every favouring circumstance as it climbs the hills. Thus the shepherd responds to a real interest in his sheep. If you go farther still and make him your teacher in facts concerning different breeds, with the names he uses for them at different periods of their life, you will find yourself in one of the innermost rooms of the shepherd's heart. But what can we moonstruck dwellers in the plains know of such matters after all? There is a world of things which he must feel, when he has told us others, that we have not the intelligence to understand.

From spring-time with its young lambs until the great annual sales in autumn is the busiest part of the shepherd's year. In hot weather he goes over his ground twice a-day—to see that his sheep are all right. This is the season when they are apt to roll on their backs in some hollow of the hill, becoming "awalt" as he puts it. Some will lie for a long time, waiting patiently to be released, but others die very soon, especially if the head be lying down hill. Again and again I have come upon such sheep feebly kicking their feet in the

air, and it always brings the heart the joy of having saved a life to help them up. Some of the dogs learn to raise "awalt" sheep.

The shortest review of his life must be very incomplete without some reference to these faithful friends of the shepherd. Without his dogs he would be perfectly helpless on the wide moors. When a flock of sheep is passing along the road, the slightest observation is enough to make one aware of the usefulness and the intelligence of the sheep-dog. But it is on the hill where he is seen at his best. There his dogs are almost everything to the shepherd—eyes, feet, and even hands. Man and dumb beast work together as one personality, and it is a beautiful sight to watch how the one directs and the other responds to every direction. A very intelligent and highly-trained dog has made one of our shepherds known all over the country. The portrait of both of them, with a handsome silver cup gained at a large dog-trial competition, was lately in one of the leading farming as well as other papers. Notices of Agricultural Shows are sent him by their committees of management from widely distant places. One day he showed me the dog—a wiry, Border collie—working on the hill. It was a sight full of interest—perfect kindness and firmness on one side, perfect understanding and obedience on the other. The way in which he rounded up the sheep and brought them to his master was very wonderful. Signs

and sounds were thoroughly understood by him; the dog appeared to work and think with the mind of the man. One lip-whistle and he sank into the heather, another in a slightly different tone and he held straight out on the hill, a third and from a long distance he returned at once. The creature deserved all the admiration he got and all the pride his master had in him. The shepherd had trained him from a pup. Gentleness did it, he said. "They are jest like children. I couldna treat him harshly, ony mair than ane o' my ain bairns."

The irritation produced by parasites is often the cause of sheep rolling over. The shepherd finds another source of care when the blue-bottle comes to the heather bloom. This noxious insect lays in the wool the eggs which produce the dreaded maggot. If an infested sheep be long unnoticed in hot weather, the poor creature is literally eaten alive. But in summer, notwithstanding its arduous duties, the shepherd's occupation is as nearly ideal as any human one can be. A stormy winter is his most trying time. If the storm come before the sheep have been brought near to his house, he must look over his ground in the wildest days. He has to study the weather-glass constantly, and a good one is a highly valued possession. An ominous fall sends him out to find where they are, and, if need be, gather them with his dogs to a place of safety. In wintry drift, sheep often crowd into hollows, where there is a danger of their being

smothered, or down to the streams, where they may be drowned. On our wide open moors there is no shelter from the storm-drift, and the shepherd has to fight through it at every step. With his minute knowledge of locality he can generally find his way about in mist however dense, but sudden winter storms with blinding drift are his worst enemies.

The snow blowing from the uplands gathers in great heaps as high as the roof of his house. For these storms he has to be prepared, storing up large quantities of provisions in early autumn : after winter has set in, he may be cut off for weeks from his fellow-men. In cases of sudden illness the shepherd's greatest difficulty is his distance from a doctor. This and the schooling of his children are perhaps the most serious disadvantages of the hill-shepherd's life. But as we talked about his work, the day was flying apace, and we were a number of miles away, with a bad road between us and home. The sun had disappeared behind the hills, but there was a strong afterglow, and some sheep had all the appearance of wild creatures against it, as they looked down upon us from the sky-line. Deeper grew the stillness, and by a low bridge we stood and listened to the loud rush of flowing water: it made a very pleasant sound, with its restless splash and murmur filling all the ear of night.

GATHERING FOLDS.

IN the very heart of the Lammermoors, away from every human dwelling, a narrow, oblong sheep-fold stands by the side of a noisy stream. Small and insignificant to look at, it is devoid of any apparent interest, more so than most of the stone-built stells that shelter in the glens and bieldy hollows of the hills. From year to year very few eyes alight upon the place; the shepherds themselves have practically forgotten it. Yet great as is the obscurity into which it has fallen, Gathering Folds was once one of the most interesting centres in the shepherd life of the Lammermoors. Here, from many miles around, the herds came twice a-year, as much in time for the purpose of social intercourse, and of jollity and sport, as to exchange strayed and lost sheep. Where the brooding stillness is never broken now, unless by the rush of the torrent or the noise of the storm or the call of the bird, sounds of laughter and revelry once broke upon the silence and peace of the glen.

Though few of the present-day shepherds had ever been to it, many of them had some tradition or

incident to tell of Gathering Folds. One whose father was a shepherd in a remote glen had vivid recollections of the gatherings held there thirty years ago. That was in the day of its rapidly waning glory, but even then between twenty and thirty herds met at the place. Incident and memory of the kind, heard at different times and under different circumstances, pieced themselves together in the mind and awakened a desire to visit it. The difficulty was the great distance. To see it comfortably from the western side of the hills, it is best to spend a night at one of the far-out herds houses. For myself that was one of the charms of such an excursion, providing as it did the best preparation for seeing Gathering Folds. With leisure and fair weather the rest was easy. An invitation to more than one shepherd's home was waiting to be taken advantage of, and one evening in autumn I found myself sitting and talking about the place we were to visit next day over the light of a ruddy peat-fire. No sleep more sound and no couch more comfortable than the sleep and the couch far among the hills. The thoughts sink softly into unconsciousness, lulled to rest by the sound of the stream, and awaken to it again, strengthened and refreshed, with the dawn of another day. The constant consciousness of kindly feeling gives a savour to every meal. Then the perfect beauty of a fair, sweet morning among the hills! Shreds of mist rise and disappear from the heights as the sun

mounts higher above the long curve of the moors into a sky as blue as that of April. The clear fresh air shows up and accentuates and yet increases the harmony of every hue. Nature and life are both recreated, and there is a feeling of youthfulness in the heart. Every little haugh by the stream is a fairer and fresher green for its early bath of dew. The stream itself babbles past, the sheep bleat from the hill ; not another sound falls upon the ear. The splash of rushing water sounds happier for the glistening sunbeams. Set down in the midst of this beautiful morning scene with its light-blue smoke rising into the breathless air, the shepherd's home provides the human association which crowns and interprets Nature. But scene and experience are alike indescribable ; these moments of life each one must see and interpret for himself.

Early in the day we were away to traverse the four miles which kept us from Gathering Folds. The nearest way lay through the shepherd's own ground, and we climbed a long slope where an old track crosses the hill. The heather, unburnt for many years, grew tall and wiry on the other side, and made the going very difficult. Only a rare lark rose silently from our feet, or a shrill-voiced pipit. The red grouse had begun to pack and seek the highest parts of the moors. Alpine hares started before us on the upland, running a little way, and then sitting up with their forefeet raised into the air. For them the shepherd, like so many of his

class, has no love. They are increasing far too fast, he thinks, and they feed on the finest pasture. Even the hay-ricks built in the glens for winter provender suffer from them. To these many hares come under cover of night and pull out the hay about the foundations to such an extent that some are in danger of falling. So the shepherd talked as his dog chased one of them over the hill.

A steady pace soon brought us to Gathering Folds. The glen in whose upmost reaches it lies is one of the largest and most attractive in all the hills. The highest summits of the Lammermoors lie within a short distance of it, and the stream which follows it soon grows larger and noisier than most of their other streams. As high as the fold, however, it is but a small, clear, brawling mountain-brook. On both banks are traces of an ancient stell; they may have been once used for a common purpose, and this perhaps explains the name of Gathering Folds which many shepherds give to the remaining one. As it stands, it is only part of a more ancient stell, whose stones have been used to build it. The narrow and oblong shape made it more easy to catch the sheep.

Soft September sunshine revealed the rich purple of the heather. Close at hand the bells showed signs of fading, but on distant ridge and hillside the tints were as rich as at any time. Myriads of heath-bells within a small space, each one adding its inappreciable tribute to the general effect,

they suggested infinite numbers, like unceasing raindrops or the snowflakes in a storm or the sand by the shore. Their hosts baffled every possible calculation. Within a few yards it would have taken days to have counted them, so closely were they crowded along the slender stems, and they extended for miles on every side. Autumn had laid her finger on the bracken, and under her breath it was turning gold and brown. Patches on the slopes of the glen were pale and wan with fading bents, but little gairs, kept fresh by unseen rills which watered them, had never lost the vivid green of early spring. Nature provided large compensations for the silence of song and of the glad wild note of moorland bird. For the eye, at least, among the hills it was the sweetest time of all the year.

By the side of the stell, with no distracting influence to disturb the thoughts, the story of the past took new form again. The erection of the modern wire-fence, which reaches for miles between different sheep-runs, helped to sound the death-knell of Gathering Folds. In earlier shepherd days there were no fences beyond boundary pits, or turf and stone walls which such hardy creatures as sheep of the black-faced mountain breed could leap at almost any point. Then they strayed without let or hindrance for many miles, wandering long distances. Now a solitary sheep or two, straying through some dilapidated place in a fence, get no farther than the neighbouring run, where the shepherd soon hears of them.

But twice a-year, in older days, herds came from different parts of the Lammermoors, bringing or seeking for strayed sheep. The earlier gathering took place each season on the first Tuesday after the eighteenth of July, which was regarded as the latest date for sheep-shearing. The shepherds came again in early October, about the time of keeling or ruddling, when each sheep had the characteristic red or blue mark of its hirsel—all the sheep under one herd's care—put upon it. Strayed sheep had to be brought twice, and, if still unclaimed, were sold to provide part of the refreshment for another day. To the same fund each farmer who entered upon a farm with any part of its sheep-land on the Lammermoors was expected to contribute a recognised sum. Where an old lease was renewed, he gave half this amount. Gathering Folds belonged to the day when such a thing as temperance in the use of intoxicating drinks was practically unknown. Every class in the community was more or less touched by an evil habit, the wealthiest and most intelligent as much as the poorest. No function was complete without strong drink, even in the farthest and most remote glens among the hills. At every gathering of the shepherds copious supplies were provided from a generous fund, and many drank hard and deep, harder and deeper for a lengthened abstinence. On this side, at least, there was no room for anything but feelings of relief and gladness among friends and masters when the need for Gathering Folds passed away.

But here, too, men met in that social converse which is helpful and pleasant to any class with common interests. Before the day when the press first found its way into the remotest corners of the country, bringing, week by week, echoes of the outside world, Gathering Folds was an important centre for disseminating the news of a wide countryside. All the gossip of the hills found free expression here. The day itself was recognised as a holiday, and hours were given to sports—putting the stone, leaping, wrestling, and other forms, on a haugh by the stream. Near the entrance to the stell there lies a large stone. Only one or two of the shepherds, by sheer strength of muscle, could raise and carry it, clasping the boulder close to the body with the hands. It was regarded as a great achievement for the strong men of the company to struggle with it to the top of a small slope. Yet the shepherds had a tradition that some of their ancestors, lifting it easily, used it as a putting-stone in older days. There were men among them with a reputation for skill and strength in wrestling, and for years a herd from the other side of the hills was the recognised champion. There is another game involving both strength and skill, which consists in two competitors sitting opposite to one another, with legs stretched out so as to oppose the feet to each other, sole placed against sole. With both hands apart, they gripped a strong stick laid cross-wise between them, and each struggled to pull the

other up. This kind of play is known by different names in different parts of the country, but among the shepherds it was called "sweir stick." Under the power of the imagination, the past took more definite form as we talked about it. There were the stone and the stell and the place where, lithe and strong, they struggled for the mastery. One had but to close the eyes in order to see them, band after band of shepherds, back to those who had practised sword-play and archery in the day when the call of his country in its hour of danger reached the shepherd among his peaceful flocks, across broad miles of moorland. Even the days of the giants loomed darkly through the haze of their distant years, and men, mighty of brawn, lifted the great stone by the entrance of the stell, to hurl it far over the heather.

Before night those sheep which had been brought to Gathering Folds were adjudged, and lost ones restored to their owners. The right to a strayed sheep had to be fully established, for each one reclaimed meant the loss of a possible perquisite for the shepherds. There was the stock mark—a piece taken out of some part of either ear—to help identification, and the shepherd's own mark, made with a piece of keel or coloured chalk on the animal's wool. All the sheep of one hirsel have one particular mark of the kind, known by such different names as sword, kidney, rib, rigging, or head keels, according to their shape and position. Then these

marks might be in blue or red colour, so that there was no end to the possible variety. The shepherd had to show that the reclaimed sheep possessed both the marks of his master's stock and of his own hirsel or flock before he was allowed to take it away.

A herd or two come still, drawn by the force of long habit, but Gathering Folds is little more than a memory, and the old days are almost forgotten. Yet it was pleasant to sit and talk about them in the September sunshine to the murmur of the noisy stream. The nearest dwelling lay some miles down the glen. Towards it we followed the babbling water, past the Shiel, a little lonely erection for the comfort of the sportsman and his ponies. The glen itself deepened, and large cleughs with their tributary streams opened on either side, each one reaching into the heart of its own hills. Here and there a lonely rowan showed traces of beautiful russet-red. Some birches were turning fast to those tints of yellow and orange which make the birch-tree, with its drooping tresses, shine out like a fountain with jets of golden spray. Every height gleamed purple in the sunshine, every haugh was russet and brown with bent and bracken. The shepherd crossed the stream and climbed the slope to return home another way. For myself, many more miles of purple moorland with the welcome and shelter of another kindly shepherd's home at

the close of the day. What could make a better temporary respite from the work of busier life? It is pleasant to walk the hills with congenial companionship. Life rejoices and expands under its stimulating influence; but it is right pleasant to be among them alone with the silences of God.

NATURE'S GARDEN.

LARGE-FLOWERED marguerites gleamed through the dusk of a summer evening. The neutral-tinted grasses disappeared in the deepening twilight, and the hay-fields seemed meadows of marguerites alone. They grew so abundantly that their wide-rimmed discs appeared over wide stretches to touch one another. Little, narrow fields of the townspeople on the hillside could be seen a long way off in the gloaming, white against the browns and greys about them. One night these countless marguerites spread their beautiful petals, drinking the dews of heaven beneath a clear sky, and before another there was not a single standing flower.

The dawn had hardly ceased to redden the east and the great sun begun to mount the sky when the mower rose to the work of a new day. White vapour hanging lightly over the river, cirrus cloud high in the blue, and a calm, fresh, invigorating touch in the atmosphere, were Nature's forecast of continued sunshine. The grasses were ready for cutting, and he came with his horses to the hay-field. All

morning and right through the day, under a fervid sun, the pleasant note of his mowing-machine filled the air. A happy sound out of the heart of summer, this rattle of constantly mowing knives, vibrating, shrilling like some living creature! One could listen to it long enough, while the strong-limbed horses drew the mower round and round the field. The old conditions of haying may be changed, but man cannot destroy the poetry of Nature. She has tuned the machine to a pleasant harmony with herself. In its own way the sound was as characteristic of hay-time as the frolic and laughter of man and maiden had once been. The season had entered into the iron framework and made it musical; the shrilling of the mower sounded light and buoyant, without the deeper, more serious rustle of the reaping-machine in harvest. Each season expresses in its own way the feeling, the spirit of the changing year. Now it was a careless, gladsome note, full of the romance of country life, but it meant death to myriads of wild flowers. Over went large marguerites with the falling grasses; over went humbler plants—birds-foot trefoil, ragged robin, and yellow rattle. Before night there was nothing but long swathes where the grasses and wild flowers had rejoiced in the sunshine or waved to the breeze. The dews freshened and kept their colours bright till another morning; but as the day advanced leaf and petal withered quickly, and before the second evening all their bright hues had faded. Under the

knives of the active machine, shrilling out its pleasant melody to the summer day, the wild flowers had fallen to be scorched and blackened in the oven of the sun.

That was the fate of countless flowers, and of the marguerites, emblems of purity in their whiteness, lighting up the dusky twilight, floating like water-lilies in the dewy bath of the summer night. The sun which gave them their beauty of brilliant colouring, as soon as they were cut down, gathered it again to himself. Yet each of them had represented a life as mysterious, as divine in its own way, as that of the higher creatures. Each had been the channel of a life which, once taken, could never be restored. Every wild flower was an embodied thought, multitudes resembling one another so closely as to be beyond the recognition of men, and yet each living its own individual life. Each one represented an ideal, one of the highest of all—the ideal of beauty. There was an aspiration, a prayer at the heart of each wild flower, the spirit of the Eternal had entered into every one. Each of the myriad flowers of summer was a life complete in itself, an ideal, a soul with the breath of heaven breathed into it. Like the rich blue and purple veils of old temples, the fair colours concealed a sanctuary bright with the presence of the Divine. That was what another taught me of the flowers, one who, out of a tender, loving heart, cares for them as she cares for the birds and every one of

God's creatures. Unless for some definite purpose, she holds it a waste of life to pluck carelessly a wild plant, as if they were sentient, almost conscious creatures. Yet in the hay-field multitudes were cut down and blackened rapidly in death. They are of no account, the very children pluck them everywhere, and fast as they fade in the heated hand cast them away by the roadside. There is no League of Pity for the wild flowers. The mysteries of man's life are only part of a wider mystery which casts its shadow over the whole of Nature.

We never really need to wander far to find the flowers: they garnish wayside banks where people constantly come and go; the fairest of them blossom close to the dust of the common road. There a wonderful variety of them may be found, and the miles will glide pleasantly past while the eye is searching for them. It is not alone the variety of the wild plants that strikes one by the roadside; here, where least expected, one may come upon a plant not to be found in any other place. By the side of one road the strange, purple-veined flowers of the henbane grow in their season. On the high embankments along another, creeping corydalis—seen nowhere else around—covers everything in summer, mounting raspberry canes, twining about the stems of high grasses, throwing long festoons of fresh green leaf and small pale flower over the gorse bushes.

Many plants appear in the narrow grassy border by the road, so that one may know the season of the

year by them, and even the time of the day. Where the sward widens or rises to a high slope it is sure to be rich in wild-flower life. The most beautiful blue flowers—dog violet, germander speedwell, meadow cranesbill, delicate harebell, each with its own shade of blue—are flowers of the road. Low-stemmed eyebright and red bartsia encroach in autumn on its dust, white clover and birds-foot trefoil rise from the short sward behind, purple hardheads, rosy scabious, yellow hawkweeds, with less common plants like toad-flax and sweet agrimony, brighten the higher grasses between the sward and the hedgerow or the wall. Here, too, purple-flowered thistles rise tall and stately, and where there are damp places or open ditches, meadow-sweet is sure to breathe its heavy fragrance into the air. Nor is there any lack of flowering-shrubs in their season—blackthorn mantling its dark prickly twigs with masses of snowy blossom, fragrant may, gold of gorse and graceful broom, dainty wild roses lifting long stems above a thicket of other bushes or threading the green of the hedges, that the eye of the traveller may rejoice in the beauty of the delicate petals. These last are the dearest flowers of the wayside. The dust which lies grey on the leafage of summer does not get time to tarnish their exquisite but evanescent beauty. Pure white, pale and deeper shades of pink with yellow stamen and snowy-hearted petal, they grow best beside the footpath, along the lane or the

common road, as if they had a mission to brighten the ways of men.

Many different circumstances affect the growth and variety of plant-life. Through their influence each part of a country has its own characteristic flora. Wherever the conditions are favourable some kinds are almost sure to be found. Others, however, show a certain waywardness of distribution, like birds which are found in one place and never in another that seems equally if not more favourable for them. Natural agencies may have carried the seeds to a favoured spot, and so account for their existence there. But this is not always sufficient to explain the fact why wild flowers should flourish and spread by one roadside and in one place of a limited locality rather than another. There is a region of reserve and mystery in all her processes which the closest study of Nature can never break through. In every manifestation of life she reveals the infinite. Within her wide realm the unexpected is always happening, and knowledge and experience coming on something which upsets all their received canons. This fathomless depth of Nature is part of the endless interest of things.

Man himself is a fellow-worker with her in the dissemination of plant-life. To his agency may often be traced the appearance of wild flowers in fresh places. Some kinds he sows with the seeds of grasses, accidentally or of intention, to improve the feeding quality of the pasture. Passing a field one

day, I came on a new flowering - plant rising conspicuously above the waving hay. Even from some distance it was possible to recognise its uncommon nature. The long graceful bend of the stem and the pendent white flowers hanging singly along it suggested the air and appearance of Solomon's seal. It proved to be one of the lychnises with much smaller flowers than those of the common wayside kind, suspended like drops along the high-arched stem. These plants had wandered with the grasses far from their native soil, for the lychnis was not to be found in very complete lists of the flowers of the country. Succory, common burnet, and yellow melilot are other flowers practically confined in many places north of the Border to old meadow and hay-field. They have not yet reached the wayside. Time is needed to naturalise them ; they still bear the stamp of the uitlander, and keep to the fields where man has planted them.

Other plants that have found their way into the wild may be traced to some garden. Cast over the wall, carried down perhaps by a stream, they have rooted and spread in places where they are now perfectly at home. In one ancient farmstead garden among our hills, *Mimulus guttata* with its bright, richly-spotted flowers had been a common plant. The house itself has almost entirely disappeared ; an ancient apple-tree or two whose fruits have grown as small as that of the crab-tree mark the former site of the garden. Yet the mimulus

flourishes in a little stream close to the spot as bravely as in its best days. Along this rill roots have been borne to a larger stream, and from that again to the river, to strike and grow in every likely place. The fisherman comes on great breadths of green leaf and flower brightening the banks and reaching far into the water, making islands of vivid colour round the stones, and others rejoice in its beauty as they follow the course of the stream. Long after house and garden have been forgotten the mimulus will flourish, bearing flowers year by year to bring ever new pleasure and delight. Nature has shown in its preservation a strange lack of the sense of proportion, yet it may be that the mimulus is one of her parables. The hand which planted it first in a corner of the garden has long mouldered to dust, but the flower continues to add its tribute, summer after summer, to the beauty of a country-side. I think sometimes of the mimulus and take fresh courage for the actions whose flowers and fruit are never seen. If they survive in some way and help to bring sunshine into other lives, we may build them too into a wider and higher ideal of life. When the day of the planter has passed into the shadows, let some other life carry them into one with wider opportunity, and that into a larger still. There may they root and grow, and may he who stoops to admire their beauty lift up his heart in thanksgiving to the great Gardener.

THE BURDEN OF THE BIG HAWK.

IN spite of every discouragement, one species or another of the larger hawks come to our hills every year. No amount of persecution has, so far, been successful in driving them quite away. Part of the great stream of immigration, flowing between the Continent and Great Britain, breaks upon the coast near these hills. Observations at the Isle of May and the Farne Isles show that we must be in one of its main currents, which makes the county of Berwickshire a gateway for a host of immigrants. Among other birds, great hawks often reach us, for most part towards the end of the season. The Lammermoor Hills lie close to the sea, and these wild birds, landing from a flight over the German Ocean, which their powerful wings make of little more account than a broad river, turn naturally to them both for security and food. Thus it comes about that almost every winter some of them are reported by the shepherds, and the great majority never leave us. That is where the tragedy of the big hawk lies.

In very old days, before the red grouse had be-

come a sporting fetish, these hawks nested among the solitudes of the Lammermoors. The eagle himself did not deign to regard them as outside the range of a royal visit. One glen, known as Ernscleugh, has probably received its name from the sea eagle, and a bird of the kind haunted a hill by the side of it for weeks, though many years ago. Another was seen later on a high moor at the back of the parish. The osprey, too, has paid a passing visit to the Dale, and one was once noted above its river. A small cleugh in another of the glens is known as Gladskleugh, and was possibly an ancient haunt of the glead or kite. The last one in the district was trapped in a pole-trap not far from Gladskleugh. Was he visiting—like the eagle—under the pressure of some hereditary impulse, the home of his ancestors? The bird may be seen still, a beautiful specimen of *Milvus regalis*, in a case kept in one of the houses of the town. On a part of the upper moors known as the Middles—a rushy place between two streams—the hen-harrier nested every year. The last young were destroyed and their remains brought to adorn a gamekeeper's museum. This was early in the forties of last century.

Practically every winter since large hawks of one kind or another have visited the hills. The peregrine comes most frequently. His nesting-places, on the rocky coasts or islets near, bring the Lammermoors within easy reach of his rapid wings, and he finds in the number of red grouse and black-

game an irresistible attraction. One of these birds was the chief actor in a most unusual scene which was witnessed on the East Water, within a mile of the town. A flock of five wild geese appeared, flying low over a wood, when suddenly a large hawk attacked one, trying hard to detach it from the rest. In this the assailant was successful, but the hunted bird, after doubling and twisting in the air with cries of terror, made for a high plantation on the banks of the stream, struggled through the trees, and by a wide circuit tried to rejoin its companions. The onlookers thought that the hawk gave up the pursuit, but it is too probable, with such a relentless enemy, that the wood hid from them another more successful attack farther up the stream. An incident of a similar kind fell within my own experience. Two of us were walking down one of the glens from its upper end, when a herring-gull was seen flying in the same direction as we were going, high above the stream, and to all appearance exhausted. We heard it screaming repeatedly, and it was the loud screams which first drew our attention to it. A little way down the cause of its consternation appeared, also from behind us, in the form of a peregrine hawk making repeated dives at the sea-bird, which screamed loudly every time. The pursuer might easily have killed his quarry, but to our astonishment this was evidently not his purpose. After playing with it for a time in a way that brought all the terrors of death to the

gull, he flew more slowly, and allowed it to get away down the glen. Then followed a strange sequel. Two kestrels flew out from a rocky gorge—probably they had young—and began in turn to tease the peregrine. By-and-by the three birds—all falcons—began to rise high into the air, and circle round and round, far above the stream,—as fine and remarkable a sight as any admirer of wild life could hope to see in a lifetime. The two smaller falcons and the larger one could be easily distinguished, until they were lost to the eye behind the shoulder of a hill. There is no denying the fact that the peregrine does a great deal of damage on a well-stocked moor, and several specimens remain to attest the gamekeeper's watchfulness and skill.

In some of our houses glass-cases may be seen with several varieties of large hawk—peregrine, hen-harrier, kite, the common, rough-legged, and honey buzzard, and probably an immature specimen of the goshawk. Within a period of six years, most of these kinds have been trapped or shot. The hen-harrier fell a victim after frequenting the woods and hills for weeks. One evening a keeper on a quiet road saw a strange bluish bird as big as a gull flying overhead on its way to a roosting-place. His gun was ready to his shoulder. Bang! Bang! The first shot stopped the hawk on its onward flight, the second brought it down. Even in the glass-case, and somewhat indifferently preserved, this hawk looks a noble bird. A honey buzzard frequented

a small lake in a woodland sanctuary, coming to it probably for its insect life, and was shot one summer in the same way. Last winter an uncommon spectacle might have been seen almost any evening near the mouth of one or other of the glens. It was nothing less than that of three rough-legged buzzards, circling along the upland. Here, surely, were birds worth protecting. But no! they, too, must be sacrificed to the insatiable Kali of sport. So one was surprised by a stream-side eating a rabbit. Another met her end in a trap, baited for vermin, and was killed after being taken. This last was a splendid bird, with a wide sweep of wing. Only one of the three was happy enough to escape, after hunting the moors every day until spring-time.

The day of the pole-trap has passed away. Public opinion asserted itself against its cruelty, and this kind of trap had to go. One day, far out on the moor, the remains of an old one were pointed out to me. The pole still stood, a slender but strong trunk of young larch, projecting eight feet or more above the ground. On one side, a foot from the top, were marks left by a staple, to which chain and trap had been attached. When the hawk was taken, it fell with the chain, to die a death of lingering torture, hanging and fluttering alongside the pole. Surely no more successful and diabolical contrivance was ever invented for producing agony to the full, for a trap of the kind, from its distance, might be left unvisited for weeks, and on a perfectly

treeless moor was not likely to want a victim long. The pole-trap has been illegal for many years, but a ground one may be often as successful, and almost if not quite as cruel. One keeper did tell me of a way by which the period of suffering might be made shorter. The trap was placed near water in such a position that the fluttering bird drowned itself. The very name of hawk, not to say the barest suggestion of one, covers a world of unreasoning dislike. Once I was looking over a private collection, and chanced to remark about the harmlessness of the cuckoo, of which the owner, himself a bird-stuffer, had one or two specimens. The answer was perfectly uncompromising : "It maun dae harm. Dinna tell me it disna ! It's ower like a hawk."

What is to be done in the matter ? Interest is growing widely in the creatures of the wild. The children's eyes are being opened to a more intelligent knowledge of different kinds of birds. How can we take advantage, then, of this growing and more intelligent interest in Nature ? What can we do to preserve some of the noblest members of an interesting British fauna ? The fox-hunter is struggling to find a way of reconciling the preservation of the fox with the preservation of game. Is the big hawk perfectly incompatible with the interests of the sportsman ? The matter is worth considering, even at the cost of some sacrifice, for the loss of a noble fauna is a distinct loss to a country. Apparently legislation, which is the enlightened opinion of a

people determined to assert itself, takes that view; it provides at least for the protection of the big hawk. The statement has to be qualified, however, for everyone who takes any interest in birds knows that it is a good-natured legislation, which, for all its apparent firmness, means little if anything, after the manner of the polite nothings of a side of social life. But confine the question to this aspect. It is one between legislation and its assertion, between a law for the avowed protection of these nobler hawks and their destruction in despite of it. There is a law protecting them, but again every one interested in birds, above all in uncommon ones, knows that the law is everywhere broken.

Gamekeepers are not to blame. They are simply doing their duty, or what they consider their duty, for the protection of game. The man's bread and that of his family depend upon it. He is practically required to show diligence in the destruction of these creatures. There is no discrimination in the eyes of many of his employers between one kind of hawk and another, though some may do infinitely more good than harm. I know many keepers intimately, so intimately that they suffer remarks about the destruction of the big hawk with a good-natured indulgence. Most of them are genuinely kind-hearted, intelligent men, with even a consciousness in some cases of the cruelty of it all, but what are they to do? As things are, it is difficult to advise them. Their very pride in the possession of these

big hawks after they have been killed is itself a testimony to an admiration for them. True enough, the stuffing is too often atrociously done, without any regard for natural expression or pose, because the preserver is without any knowledge of the bird's habits. Perches of clay or some other meaningless composition are made for them. The sight of the birds tortured in death as well as in life makes the thought of their wholesale destruction harder to bear. Only lately, it must be confessed, I had a hand in the preservation of one of the rough-legged buzzards, so far as having sent it to a well-known and efficient taxidermist. Another—a common buzzard—looks down upon my writing-table from the top of a bookcase. Long ago it fell to the old keeper's gun—one of many more,—and though roughly used by the moth and the years, is warmly cherished as a memento of him. All the same, with many others I hate their slaughter, even while exonerating the gamekeeper who has to be the agent of it.

The policeman is not to blame. At the prescribed season he puts up the county notices with a list of birds that are to be protected. For a long time, too, different local designations of some birds were given, so that there might be no mistake. For many the season of protection covers months, for others it extends over the whole year. All this on a bill so conspicuous that he who runs may read. "The taking or killing of any of the following Wild Birds is hereby prohibited through-

out the whole year." Under this section of the Act a special list is given, with the big hawks among them. These notices are to be found by any country roadside. They seem all right—a clear expression of the law, and a severe penalty for its infringement. Yet you know that the whole thing is little short of ridiculous. Not one conviction is made in innumerable breaches of the law, though when a conviction is obtained it is trumpeted all over the country. What can the policeman do? Anyone with any knowledge of things knows that in the life of a community, even with the law behind him, he would be more likely to suffer himself than to benefit anyone by carrying out the functions of his office in certain directions. There are cases where common-sense must guide a constable of highest principle as much as the law,—cases and convictions which his chief will not thank him for bringing to the light. There are abuses where, rather than ineffectually interfere, it is wiser to leave them alone. The policeman represents in one form the majesty of the law, but under circumstances it amounts to very little, however faithful and excellent an officer he may be. The protection of the big hawk, like some other things, lies outside his sphere.

It is only through a change in public sentiment, through the passing of public apathy, that the law can be successfully enforced. This means a big movement, and every big movement, from its nature,

is a slow one. Voices here and there, urging it, are generally voices crying in the wilderness. I speak only for a small part of the country, but the destruction is going on all over the land. Yet here, perhaps, it is more marked, because the conditions are so favourable for the larger hawks. We have wide moors for them to range over, and large, little disturbed woods with the tall trees they love for nesting. There is no use lamenting the general attitude to them in the past, with its disastrous results. Winter after winter big hawks will come still, wandering to us from the Continent. What can be done to give them some measure of protection in the future? The honey buzzard might nest here as readily as these birds once did at Selborne—the Hanger, with its beeches, for such a purpose is not to be compared with two, at least, of our woods. All the buzzards would remain and breed,—the useful buzzard, with other large hawks as well. As things are, that is a consummation hardly to be hoped for, but it is surely worthy of a place in a bird-lover's dreams.

A MEDLEY OF BIRDS.

THERE is no part of a country without its own share of the many-sided life of Nature. Within even a limited area it is impossible to exhaust the field, and the diligent observer is constantly making fresh discoveries. New forms of life increase and extend their range; accidents of some kind bring others into places where they have never been found before. Considerations of the kind make the study of the bird-life of any locality particularly interesting. These free creatures of the air hardly know any limit to their movements from one place to another. Mountains and rivers present no barrier, and far distances are rapidly covered on light and easy wing. The very freedom of their movements through the air makes flight a continual joy to them. For this reason they are more restless and active than most other forms of life. An exceedingly small proportion, under different influences, do not change their locality at one season or another of the year, so that no life is so kaleidoscopic and so fluctuating as the bird-life of a country.

But while they give to each spot its own individual

interest, some places are more favourable than others for this study. One of the most favoured is the basin of the Leader, which is unsurpassed for the number and variety of birds found in it. Along the Dale which the river follows is one of the routes traversed by the migrant host, both when they arrive in spring-time and when they leave again towards the close of the season. A second line of bird-flight intersects this one in a direction more from north-east to south-west, passing over our highest hills, and crossing the Dale transversely. The latter avian thoroughfare is the course taken by many of the sea-birds generally, and by the waders as they cross the intervening country from the Firth of Forth to that of the Solway. Gulls of different species may be seen at times winging their way along it, some of them to rest for a breathing-space on St Mary's Loch, the largest sheet of inland water in the south of Scotland. The remains of a common tern were recently found close to a Lammermoor stream. From a ring affixed to one of its legs, the bird must have come from the Solway side of the island, probably to fall a victim to the onslaught of some hawk on the hill. But in addition to casual or constant travellers following such routes,—sea-birds and birds from countries on the other side of the North Sea,—the diversified character of the country produces a corresponding variety of more resident bird-life.

Different species of large hawks have already been

mentioned as visiting the hills around, to their own destruction. The close preservation of abundant game makes the life of a hawk a most precarious one. The daring little hobby is an exceedingly rare visitor, but there is a record of one shot a number of years ago. It was to be seen in a local collection of birds which was dispersed after the death of the owner. Merlins strive almost every year, in spite of constant persecution, to obtain a foothold on our extensive moors. During the past summer a pair got so far as a nest with four eggs in the heather, but they were both shot. Sparrow-hawks for the same reason are seldom seen. The rearing of young pheasants does bring birds of the kind from long distances around, but few of them escape from a summary retribution. Kestrels, on the other hand, are among the most familiar of our birds. Wide pasture-land and rolling moor provide them with a ready means of subsistence, and, unless where they make a foray among his pheasant chicks, the keeper never troubles them. With an increase in the field-mice their numbers grow rapidly; in a recent vole year as many as thirty kestrels were counted within a short distance by one of our streams. A pair occasionally have their nest in an old quarry close to the town. Everywhere they are the most confiding of the hawks. Spending so much of their time in the open air like the swallow, and beside the haunts of men, blind indeed must the eye be that is not familiar with the beauty of

the kestrel's russet plumage and his wonderful powers of hovering and flight.

Most of the members of the crow family meet, if that were possible, with shorter shrift than even the hawks. Nor do they get much sympathy,—the amount of destruction among young birds and eggs of which the carrion is capable is too palpable. A carrion- or hoody-crow, as he is indiscriminately called, seems to gloat in his wickedness, and besides, he may be safely left to look after himself. In spite of every effort to exterminate him, his harsh note is a common sound, and every year he contrives to rear new broods in the large woods around. From the sea grey crows come every winter, but few if any spend the year with us. Most winters the raven visits the Lammermoors. One spring I saw a pair of ravens quartering a moor, and circling over it like buzzards. Thick wood and high hedgerow tempt magpies to return, but they are never allowed to nest in a country-side where they were once plentiful. The last jay was shot many years ago. Jackdaws are as destructive on occasion as any class of birds, but they, too, always hold their own. On one hillside they nest in numbers in the rabbit-burrows, and provide pets for the boys of the vicinity. With crooked sticks and other ingenious contrivances, where an arm will not reach them, they manage to drag nests and young birds from the nesting-holes.

With so much wood and pasture, both tawny and

long-eared owls occur very freely, and under the wintry starlight their hooting is heard on every side. Towards the close of the year the short-eared owl comes to the moors, though there is no record of its nest. Late into last spring several of these birds haunted the town pasture. There they quartered heath and rushes—a pretty sight,—scanning every place with keen eye, and darting down hawk-like to strike at their prey. About grey projecting stones on the moor their pellets—almost entirely made up of the bones and fur of voles—lay in every direction. Sailing and circling high against the westering sun, they resembled large hawks or sea-gulls in their flight. The beautiful barn-owl disappeared for many years before the gun. Three years since a casual visitor was shot farther down the river, as it sat drenched beneath a spruce fir. Under such discouraging circumstances it seemed impossible that the white owl should ever return. During the past winter, however, a pair hunted for mice near the town, and one at least has been frequently seen near the bridge, where many years ago these birds yearly reared their young in the holes of the masonry. There I have twice seen one flitting silently and ghost-like along the stream in the twilight. One would sacrifice a good deal to have the barn-owl safely established again as a resident bird.

Three or four pairs of herons nest in the tall spruces of a woodland near the river, and there is a

larger herony lower down the Dale. The goat-sucker is far from common, yet hardly a summer passes without one or more of these birds being seen. Every season the great spotted wood-pecker raises broods in the depths of our woods. Nests of the woodcock were rarely, if ever, found some time since, but now the game-watcher and the woodman come upon them almost every year. Lately keepers knew of two at the same time in adjoining woods. For all this appreciable increase the bird is not in any sense plentiful, and one who has been accustomed to his familiar note in more northerly woods misses it here in the gloaming. A few birds arrive in autumn, and there have been as many as six brace in a season's bag. A remarkable fact is that the keen-sighted woodcock, which threads his way so nicely through the tangle of trunk and twig in the densest wood, should be found so often dead beneath the telegraph-wires.

The kingfisher would increase if permitted, we have so many quiet woodland streams. A bird of the kind was captured two years since in rather a remarkable way. On a shadowy reach of a brook flowing through a deep-set glen a pair had taken up their temporary abode; they were often seen from a cottage which stands beside the wood-mill driven by its waters. One day a kingfisher entered by the open door, and was caught fluttering against a window. Probably a hawk had chased it into the house, as one was

noticed a few days later darting at a kingfisher on the stream. Word was sent me of the interesting fact, and I saw the captive under a basket on the cottage table. It was in beautiful plumage, glistening with the living sheen of those iridescent tints which fade so soon after death. Held in the hand, it pecked vigorously with its large bill, and when released at the door flew up the mill-race. Though occurrences of the kind are extremely uncommon, another bird of marshes and watery places was captured about the same time in one of the houses of the town under circumstances quite as unusual. A water-rail flying overhead in the darkness had probably been attracted by the lights of the street underneath. In any case the rail was chased by a cat from the roadway into a house. The people caught and kept it, but the bird did not survive its capture long.

Of less common finches the goldfinch is sometimes met with, generally in winter. If anywhere, the bird shows itself on the roadside bank among thistles and other weeds. An observing and interested roadman, who is familiar with them as cage-birds, has seen more goldfinches than any one about. A rarer bird still, in point of numbers, though it remains all the year,—the hawfinch,—nests every summer. In the grounds of one house several old nests have been found, and these birds are observed every year. Frequently in January of the present one a male hawfinch appeared in the garden or in the taller trees about it. One day

he was seen busily engaged under some beeches searching for mast. A quantity of mixed seeds was scattered among other bird food, close to the windows of the house, for the purpose of attracting the hawfinch. At once the bird responded to this well-meant attention, and morning after morning came to the seeds. He was under a window where he could be closely watched. Every time one of the smaller birds approached, the hawfinch threatened it by opening wide his large, ivory-looking beak. Crossbills may occasionally rear broods in our higher and more retired woods; all through a recent summer and autumn, at least, their loud, half-musical, klinking notes could be heard in the more wooded part of the Dale. One morning three crossbills came to a rounded clump of spruce and common firs in a park close to the house, and after a time passed overhead calling to one another.

Most of the warblers and other small insectivorous birds are found in our shrubberies and woods. Although the trill of the grasshopper-warbler and the monotonous notes of the chiff-chaff have not been heard by myself in the Dale, once at least both of these birds have been observed within the past few years by people familiar with them, and versed in ornithology. The pied-flycatcher had never been identified before, but what was my pleasure in the spring of the past year (1912) to see a pair catching flies over the river. It was exceedingly early in the season—April 23—for such

birds. In June the male was watched for some time near the place where they must have nested, as he had food in his bill. The nest itself was never found, but probably it had been placed in a hole of the high bridge which carries the roadway over the river. During May, while staying in the Lake District, we had found pied flycatchers nesting both in walls and tree-trunks, and grew familiar with the male's vivid black-and-white colouring, and his wonderfully loud and pleasing song. Within a short distance of one town we counted a dozen birds, and heard one singing from its market-place.

Want of definite bird knowledge and the necessary observation are the most likely explanation of the fact that rarer waders, such as the greenshank, the green sandpiper, and others, have never been recognised. There are two or three nesting-colonies of dunlin in the hills to the north of the Dale. The actual nest still waits discovery on the remote moors where they breed. This year two attempts were made in very wet weather, and at one place a large fragment of the shell of a dunlin egg was found. The dotterel still, though at far intervals, rests for a day or two on our upland moors on his northward journey. Two were lately shot by a shepherd in a meadow in front of his house.

The valley of the Leader is not too far from the sea for storm-driven and other sea birds. Guillemots, and even the little auk, have been found in the

Dale. A year ago one of these latter birds was discovered dead near a woodland on an upper pasture. Gulls, on light and powerful wing, easily surmount the barriers of the hills—not only common and herring gulls which often follow the plough, but lesser and, much more rarely, greater black-backed ones. I noticed one morning a small party of greater black-backs flying south and calling all the time, with a sound which might have been taken for the honking of geese. A nesting marsh of the black-headed gull lies a few miles away, and through the long summer twilight numbers of them hawk the fields, especially such as have trees about them, for moths. One or two dry summers have made the black-headed gull a familiar bird even in the town. Increasing failure of their natural food-supplies has rendered them more dependent on man, and a kindly thoughtfulness on the side of the towns-people has helped to increase their confidence. Now they come freely to the house-doors for bread soaked in milk or water, and alight on the roofs, and often on the street. Though we are more than twenty miles from the sea, and in a deep valley among the hills, the sight of so many white-breasted gulls on the houses, or floating easily in the air above, suggests a seaport place, and one almost expects to smell the breath and briny freshness of the sea. During a very hot and rainless summer black-headed gulls frequented some fields to catch and devour the mice when the haycocks were being

removed. In winter other birds from the sea visit us. Passing wild geese and varieties of duck are sometimes seen crossing overhead along their own lines of flight, while the shepherds have observed wild swans winging their way over the higher moors. In winter goosanders frequently follow the course of the stream.

Hardly a winter has passed of late years without the appearance of one or more great grey shrikes. Three seasons in succession I have seen the bird. A line of telegraph-wires along the public road is a favourite perching-place. The less common waxwing has also visited the Dale. Two lovely specimens are preserved in one of our local collections. They were first observed perching upon a hawthorn tree, in a park close to the town, and the man who saw them brought word to a fellow-townsman interested in birds. When he reached the place with an old single-barrelled gun, they were still there. One of them fell to a shot, and the other continued to fly about until a second charge brought upon it a common fate. A third waxwing was obtained in the same way by a shepherd in one of our remotest glens. In one house a well-mounted turtle-dove could tell the same tale. The history of rare birds is a painfully monotonous one of powder and shot. Other uncommon species no doubt occur, but escape notice: some of them may yet find a place among our recognised ones. There is no limit to the

interest, because the field, even in a comparatively small space, is so exhaustless and so full of surprises. New facts and new objects are always waiting to reveal themselves to the open eye and the open heart.

CONVENTICLES.

THE Duke of Lauderdale was one of those lurid human shadows that fly darkly across a nation's history. His personality has acquired the unenviable notoriety of being the expression of all that was most evil in an evil day. Carlyle dismisses him from the pages of his history in his own trenchant and summary way: "Exit John, Duke of Lauderdale." Even in the traditions and annals of his own family, Lauderdale has left for himself a doubtful fame. Beneath a portrait in the Castle which he enlarged and beautified has been affixed a small plate bearing the inscription: "This man enjoyed all the great offices under the Crown, but ruined his family by giving away to an old woman, Lady Dysart, his second wife, an immense estate handed down to him through a series of prudent and able ancestors, which estate was the means of raising him to the honours which he enjoyed." Against a general consensus of adverse opinion from outsider and friend alike, what can be said? That he was perfectly callous at times to the feelings of humanity, that he was

vindictive beyond words to such as were unhappy enough to fall under his displeasure, admits of no denial. It was not a Presbyterian, but Bishop Burnet himself, who said, "He was the coldest friend and the violentest enemy I ever saw." That the interests of his country were sacrificed without scruple or thought is another grave charge which it would be difficult to disprove. That he was on occasion utterly devoid of principle, sacrificing sincerity, honour, everything which men hold highest and most sacred, to selfish ambitions, any one familiar with the history of the man and his times knows. These are surely severe counts against him, more than sufficient to condemn him at the bar of public opinion. Yet even in his case might be produced extenuating circumstances and redeeming features of character, sufficient to soften, if not materially to alter, the general attitude of mind towards him. In line with other tremendous contradictions in human nature, there are lights which break through the darkest estimate of Lauderdale's character. Some men reveal their worst qualities at home, and present, so far as their nature will allow, a fair front to the world. The people of their community, those who come in contact with them every day, have no great cause to speak well of them, they make the conditions of life about them so much harder and more cruel. They are the small-minded tyrants of a little world, while try-

ing, in common parlance, to cast dust in the eyes, even to earn high opinions wherever they touch it, from the larger world outside. Of this spirit there was not a trace in the Duke's nature. His life was on too wide a scale, and his ambitions too high to foster it. Where neither ambition nor public policy goaded him on, he was evidently capable of showing those in his neighbourhood a tolerant if not a kindly side, even where they differed from him. Openly he was a rabid persecutor of the followers of the Covenant, but often where he could do it without comment or disadvantage to himself, he performed secret kindnesses for them, and towards those within a certain radius of his own house he showed positively friendly feeling. The fact is at least remarkable, that within a few miles of Lauderdale's Castle, for most part on his own lands, more field meetings were held than in almost any other part of the country of the same extent. The cause of such an attitude towards them appears difficult to explain. Could it have been the result of some lingering influence from his own earlier days? Or was it the workings of a spirit of compunction for the cruelties and general injustice of a wider public policy, which made him perform secret kindnesses and show a more tolerant spirit within a narrower area? Who shall say so long after the man has gone to his account? Whatever the cause, a good case might be made out for the

belief that the Duke deliberately made it easier for the Covenanters to hold forbidden meetings within the sphere of his own immediate influence, and that he kept others who had the power from molesting them. In any case it is significant that in the proscribed lists of the time, among many from the country around, there occur no local names. Under the shadow, if not under the ægis, of one of the greatest persecutors of his day, the persecuted were able to hold their forbidden meetings.

The vagaries of the legislation of the time, rash and often ill-considered, passing restrictions and threatening penalties, then seeking to extenuate the disastrous effects of its own acts, had a remarkable result. Before 1670 field-meetings were mostly confined to the western parts of the country, where they led to a great deal of persecution. In the east they were practically unknown, and as a result the Presbyterians were little molested. With the passing of the Conventicle Act in 1670 against such meetings, however, and the indulgences and indemnities which followed, this state of things was completely reversed. After that year, as quickly as field-meetings began to die away in the west they broke out with great vigour in the east of Scotland, most of all in the Border counties.

Four places where conventicles were held—in one of them frequently—can be pointed out in

Lauderdale. Probably the first of these forbidden meetings in the Borders, almost certainly the last, are among them. A certain interest surrounds these spots, so close to one another, for the light which they cast on the nature of such meeting-places. Two of them make no pretence whatever to concealment. On the contrary, at a time when the country was practically bare of woodland, the worshipping Covenanters could have been seen a long way off, though there was the very palpable compensation that they themselves could keep a wide look-out. The other two took place in secluded spots, one far out among the Lammermoors, the other close to the Dale, in a hollow which might easily hold a multitude of people perfectly concealed from the outside world. Another fact which appears to have influenced the persecuted Covenanters in their choice of a meeting-place was the presence of wells. These conventicles were held for the most part in summer, often in its hottest days, and water was an essential for those who remained through the lengthened services. Apart from this consideration, it was necessary for baptismal rites, children being brought, frequently from long distances, to be baptised by the outed ministers. Accordingly, at three of the places in the Dale where meetings occurred there were wells, one still known as the Covenanters' Well. Water itself might have been procured for either purpose

from almost anywhere around, and there may have really been another influence determining the position of the spots chosen. Where one conventicle—that of Greencleugh—took place, there existed a mineral well of reputed virtue, in all probability an ancient holy one. To this day it is known as Elliot's Well, and appears to have been an iron spring. Not very many years ago a dying lady expressed a strong desire for a draught of its water, and a devoted brother rode many miles to procure it. Unfortunately sheep-drains have almost emptied it; but a thick scum on the surface of the water always reveals its mineral virtues.

Of two of the conventicles very little is known. For attendance at one of them no less a personage than Mr Charles Oliphant of Langtonlaw, a clerk of the Court of Session, was summoned before the Council. He offered the plea that he went out of mere curiosity, and escaped with a censure and a caution to be more careful in the future. To another field-meeting there is a reference in the church records of the time. Under a minute of 19th July 1677: “The minister represented that there was a conventicle on Coldsheiles’ March on Thursday night last, and yt he was informed there were some persons in the town and paroch there, and desired the Balives their assistance in censuring of any gotten notice of within the town—whilke they granted.” The remarkable thing about this

conventicle was that it took place within easy view of the Duke's upper windows, on open ground sloping towards the town and the front of his Castle. It is not enough to dismiss the fact on the easy supposition of his having been away from home. Very possibly he was, perhaps as far as London on affairs of State or of personal interest. Even then the meeting was a deliberate challenge to one with his well-known proclivities. If such a course of action towards a man of Lauderdale's power and temper appear too hazardous, we are left to the possible supposition that it sprang from his recognised indifference, if not from his secret favour.

The first of several conventicles at another place—Bluecairn—a year earlier than that of Cauldshiels was directly due to a piece of legislation inspired and devised by the Duke. An Act passed through his means in Council, 1676, made the heritors on whose lands a field-meeting took place liable to a fine of fifty pounds sterling. This threatened to bear very severely upon smaller proprietors who were the mainstay of the Covenanting movement. Fined and impoverished again and again, they were little able to bear fresh impositions and burdens even for a public profession of their faith. The fortunes of the Covenant had sunk to their lowest ebb, when, by the ready resource of one man, the Duke was checkmated by help of his own legislation. The supporters of the Covenant met at the small

Berwickshire village of Hume to discuss their affairs in the light of the new Act. Many of them had lost heart, and felt like giving up the struggle, when Mr Wm. Veitch suggested that Lauderdale himself should be made the first sufferer under his own law. The ingenious idea appealed to them all. A conventicle was held at Bluecairn, on the Duke's land, and attended by four thousand people, Veitch conducting the service. It was the first of many of the same kind, for no more favourable place for the purpose could have been found. On the Duke hearing of it he affected an anger which events showed he did not feel. When he knew who had instigated it, he shouted with pretended passion : "Was it so? My own relation. I'll think upon him." But if ever Lauderdale thought of Veitch afterward, it was in kindness. Veitch himself sought the Duke's help and that of his Duchess in times of later trouble, and found in both of them powerful if secret friends.

Until lately a Covenanters' Cairn stood on an adjoining hill to mark the position of the conventicle of Greencleugh. It was a conspicuous landmark on the moors, but, undermined by mischievous hands, most of it has fallen. In a hollow beneath, near the mineral well, the conventicle took place. It is a meeting-place of murmuring streamlets. From a wide depression among the hills brown moors climb slowly to the sky-line. A remote and solitary spot; no houses within miles, unless a

shepherd's in another glen. Lonelier now perhaps than when the people met for worship there; not far away are extensive traces of cultivation and foundations of old crofting-houses which Nature has carefully preserved. Yet even then it must have been peaceful enough for the purposes of the Covenanters. Under the brilliant rays of a July sun which the sound of babbling streams seemed to temper by a suggestion of coolness, they sat on the hillside and listened to the words of a young and impassioned preacher. On James Renwick's brow already shone the light of approaching martyrdom. The shadow of the inevitable end gave a deeper earnestness, a tenderer and more winning power to his words, as, Bible in hand, he spoke to them from the verse: "Draw me, we will run after Thee." In spite of rumours to the contrary and a strict watch, the meeting was undisturbed, though several had to answer for their presence there that day. Lauderdale was dead; Government dragoons might scour his lands and search for offenders with an impunity which had been impossible in his lifetime. But when the conventicle was held at Greencleugh the cup of persecution was almost full, and the darkness breaking ^{to} the dawn of a brighter day.

Of all the places in the neighbourhood where field-meetings were held, none make such a vivid appeal to the imagination as Bluecairn. Here took place the only conventicles from which traditions, vague

it may be, yet genuine traditions received from those who were present at them, floated down the years. Striking natural features and old historical memories combine to add to the interest of the place. It stood on the edge of a tract of country which was at one time in constant dispute between religious houses and old landed nobles. Among the oak woods around, herdsmen of the Abbey of Melrose tended their herds of cattle and swine, and fought against the frequent aggression of the men of Stow, dependants of the Bishop of St Andrews. Local place-names such as Threepwood and the older Thriepland (from thriep, to dispute) are suggestive relics of the time. Long before the ancient tribes had a fort here. A cairn of bluish stones close at hand gave rise to the later Bluecairn, but in earlier days it was called Dunedin. As the glen in its upward course shallows towards the summit of the ridge, a very indifferent road crosses it. Though so high among the fields and off the beaten track, there must have been a roadway here from remotest days. Future investigations may very likely find it to have been improved and used by the Romans; the camp at Newstead so lately opened, and so full of relics which have cast a new light on their life in a far province of the Empire, is only a few miles away. No amount of cultivation seems able to obliterate the road where it crosses the fields. Close to the farm-house, in a meadow planted many years ago with trees, the track continues visible.

Part of an ancient cist which was dug up by the side of it is still preserved. To a place so rich and suggestive in historic associations the Covenanters came to hold their forbidden meetings. What influenced others so long before may not have been without a measure of influence on them, but it was the deep, marvellous cleugh among the fields—the Covenanters' Glen—which determined their choice.

Not a glen in any ordinary sense of the word. Within a stone-throw of it the farmstead stands, yet one might go there many times without ever suspecting the existence of such a place. An old pasture field skirts the road to the house, divided from it by a loose stone wall. The appearance of the ground gives no indication of its real nature, but as one enters the meadow, an insignificant-looking hollow suddenly opens to reveal a deep descent. The field fairly yawns, and before the thoughts can well grasp it, the feet are on the edge of a valley of considerable extent, lying fifty feet beneath. There is neither bush nor tree to aid her, all is bare outline and short swarded surface, yet Nature has concealed the strange deep depression in a comparatively narrow meadow almost as perfectly as she conceals the wild creatures which cower to escape the eye. Not water so much as ice-action has scooped out the place, and time has given the sides that gentle rolling aspect which makes them pass naturally into one another and conceal what lies between. From a point

lower down it becomes more easy to appreciate its remarkable formation and extent. Here it winds in the pasture and suddenly widens upward, branching higher into two smaller but still deep hollows which gradually grow more shallow to cross the upland. In the glen itself a feeling of perfect isolation fills the heart. On one side stands a small grassy platform, two or three feet high, known as the Pulpit. Standing here, it is possible to command a large part of the hollow. The acoustics are perfect, and a voice little removed from a whisper might be heard by a multitude seated along the soft grassy sides. On the slope behind the speaker, on the rounded knoll formed by the glen where it divides above, and on the farther side opposite the Pulpit, crowds of people could listen in the days of the Covenant, without anything to indicate, a little way off, the presence of a single soul. Four thousand people attended the first conventicle at Blue-cairn, and it is certain that several more thousands would be needed to overcrowd this natural meeting-place. An impressive spectacle for any preacher! Row above row of earnest listeners all about him, many from far parts of the country, wistful, hungering faces, with the green slopes behind them and the blue dome of heaven drawn down as a curtain on every side. Before him in the hollow lay the well, made more sacred for many of them by the use of its water for the baptism of their children. His voice passed soft and low over the hushed multitude,

or broke into thunders of warning and denunciation which filled the glen. The people's praise resounded from every side in full-hearted chorus, and rose as incense to the sky.

Here an intelligent and observant friend, who had been familiar with it for more than thirty years, brought me one June evening. From the marshy ground about it, in the course of drainage operations which had emptied the well, he had found black oak representing one of the earlier aspects of the place. His were the sheep feeding peacefully around us. Standing on the Pulpit, he repeated the twenty-third Psalm without strain of voice, and yet, word by word, it could be heard in every part. Above us a snipe drummed and lapwings called. The vesper song of a lark came over the edge of the steep slope. Swallows from the homestead glided along the hollow, rising suddenly to disappear in the upper meadow. The sward of the slopes, short and soft as sea-turf, was yellow with flowering trefoil. Neither bird nor wild-plant belonged to any time. They suggested to-day with its life as little as yesterday with its silence. The bird might have glided through the glen, the flower brightened the short sward right down from the persecuting days. Only the changes that the years bring, the fashions that come and go, produce an artificial consciousness of it; there is no such thing as time in itself. Time is merely a phase of that eternal where the present includes both past and future.

So it was that the bird and the flower, gliding through the air or opening a petal to the sunshine, as they had done centuries before, grew a part of the glen, and brought the thoughts close to the times of the Covenant. The deep brown shadow mounted the eastern slope, encroaching on the soft June sunshine as the shadow of the years had crept over the multitudes who had once gathered in the glen to praise and worship God. They are gone like a dream, but their faith and their work shall remain to the end of days.

WHISPERS FROM THE PAST.

THE history of many centuries has been written roughly on our hills and moors. From periods that are dim and indistinct by reason of their long antiquity down to a generation or two ago, different ages of humanity have left behind them traces of their activity and life. In the lower country where land increases in agricultural value, such marks are soon swept away. There man himself hides under a fresh layer of soil the lingering footprints of those who have gone before him; each dead past has buried its own dead. Season after season the plough goes on obliterating the remains of other days, until nothing more than a faint memory or tradition is left. But what has been destroyed in the low country continues to be preserved on the hills. Among them it is possible to spell out intermittent portions of the past, and through the help of the imagination bring to life again echoes at least of the vanished years. Whatever of good or evil others have to say of the large sheep-farmer, the student of the past can think of him only as a helper and a friend. In the hillier

reaches of our country, where sheep pasture, or for that matter where deer feed, the stories of antiquity can best be read. As the sands and dry airs of the desert preserve such things, so have the hills and moorlands protected for many centuries the records of the past.

Long before the day of earlier riever or first invading English army, the Border country was a scene of busy tribal life and thrilling tragedy. Across centuries of silent years, from a period much earlier than the dawn of written history, come whispers of battle and sanguinary slaughter. Spear, arrow-head, and battle-axe are found over wide districts. Among the Border hills, at least, there is no surviving legend of an earlier golden age. Man so far back as he can be traced appears on the scene fighting and slaying his fellow-man. Though abundant relics of the past are found in many places, no part of the wide Borderland is more prolific of these remains than the Lammermoor hills on their western slopes. Scientific investigation has done little more than touch them; a rich field of ancient lore lies practically virgin to the searcher. Even now it is hardly possible to wander anywhere on them without constantly feeling the pulse and breath of the past, and coming on places which had once been, for their extent, crowded centres of busy life. The poet has immortalised the pastoral melancholy of Yarrow. Gala Water has its shadowy traditions of Arthurian battles, and flows through

Wedale, the dale of woe. So over beautiful Lauderdale, when the storms of winter rave, by a sympathetic ear, as in Ossian's story, the spirits of heroes may be heard contending in the deep pulsations of the blast. The wind that sighs and moans round the houses of the Dale, brings from the upland the cries of sorely stricken warriors and the sobs of hearts that have long been at rest.

A world of interesting material lies on our hills, within the compass of a pleasant walk. Along all the streams, more so where they approach the Dale, are traces of old hill-forts. On one bank of a stream are three within short distances of one another on ascending ridges of hilly ground. The highest, placed on the top of a scaur which falls steeply to the glen, is by far the most interesting, and has been deemed worthy of the dignity of special protection under the Lubbock Act. Most of the other forts have been surrounded by strong embankments of earth; this one was protected by massive walls of loose stone. For years before it came under the Act, the fort was a quarry for field-walls and other purposes, yet even now it remains a tribute to strength of mind working steadily to a definite end, and to marvellous engineering and defensive skill. Walking round the outside wall with its large facing of heavy stone along the foundations, you cannot fail to be deeply impressed. Of oval form, the side of the fort towards the stream advances to the very top of the steep scaur. Here

it must have been impregnable, but where the curve of the oval bends round on either side there was a danger of successful attack on the flanks. To reduce this danger from an enemy on the side of the stream, a lateral horn or protecting work was carried from the walls on both sides to the high slope. The interior of the fort is divided into two divisions—part may have been for the cattle,—and there are traces of human dwellings in the thick outer wall. The best season of the year to visit Haerfaulds is early in summer, before the bracken has grown tall. Then I love to steal an hour from busier life and spend it resting quietly among the old stones. The breeze sings in the heather, and over wide miles of fair Borderland lie radiant lights and gliding cloud-shadows. Blackfaced sheep feed peacefully on every side, and a wheatear hops from stone to stone. Near the outside wall an adder or two are sure to be basking; there are more of these reptiles about the old fort than in any part of the hills. I have seen them gliding quietly into the thick wall; the loathsome adder has taken the place of ancient man. Has a doom fallen on Haerfaulds? Did it suffer a sudden and swift tragedy? The grey stones have no answer. The people whose lives were once bound up with them—their passions and beliefs, the quieter currents of their domestic life, and their wars—have all passed into oblivion. Yet the eye can trace from a gateway the hollowed road which their feet once trod, and they must have been

capable of wide powers of thought, of high intelligence, and of keen sensibility. Among the lichenized stones a feeling almost of hero-worship comes into the heart. Large-minded and great-spirited must the old chief have been who designed this stronghold and directed the building of its massive walls.

On the moors that reach away from the fort are a number of hut-circles. In one part of the country the antiquarian has been able to trace buildings of this kind further back than the day of the Romans; in some parts of the Highlands again they have come down almost to our own time. Dwellings of man through many centuries, rounded in shape, rude at best, on the Lammermoors they appear to be of great age. Only practice enables one easily to detect them—a slight hollow in the ground with hints of an oval wall. There are double forms, but they all appear small, and must have made miserable dwelling-places. The best part of the day to look for these hut-circles is at early morn or in the evening, when the level rays of the sun make the smallest prominence cast a shadow. Before sunset I have seen them on the gentle slope above a stream showing out in every detail, where at midday they would have been passed unobserved.

Round that part of the upper moor known as Borrowstoun Rig, where there are so many low stone-circles, and where burial-cairns have been

found, large stones are seen among the heather. Some of these are pitted with hollows as if they had been cup-marked, though possibly in most if not in every case it is the result of water and weather. Between Borrowstoun Rig and a glen to the west are traces of what may have been a very ancient boundary. It shows as a winding line of alternate pits and traverses on the high moor. The earth from the pits has been heaped up to form an embankment—now on one side, now on another—which has sunk with the years, but is still quite visible on the hill. Near another glen a line of similar strange remains reaches for several hundred yards to the top of a deep cleugh which falls down to the stream. At this place a track in the heather—the Herring Road—which is itself centuries old, appears to have been cut through them. The father of the shepherds first pointed them out to me, saying they had often excited his wonder. It was really another curiosity of the past that we climbed the hill together to see—heaps of broken stones on the moor above, which he thought might have been gathered by the prehistoric peoples for sling-stones.

A second day in the spring sunshine, with the happy calls of hill-birds filling the air on every side, I visited them with others who were keenly interested in such relics of antiquity. It was life and freedom merely to be among the hills, and these things created an interest and pleasure of

their own. The eye of one—a well-known authority—provided a more intelligent standpoint for us all. But the low cairns, with their remains of charcoal among the broken stones and their evident traces of having been subjected once to intense heat, have never yet yielded their secret to antiquarian skill. The heart had woven its own dreams about them, and among many pitfalls found an absorbing delight in striving to reconstruct the past. The constant struggle to rescue from the waters of oblivion anything which once has been, is an expression of man's own yearning after a larger and fuller life.

With the burning of the heather on the town moor in the spring-time, a number of low tumuli became visible. They were close to the road that crosses the hill, but for many years the long stems had effectually hidden them. No standing-stone rose to call attention to them, but once seen they showed quite clearly as low rounded heaps of earth and stones. The Old Statistical Account of the parish (1793) mentions tumuli by the side of the old Melrose road. For many years their place and existence had been entirely forgotten, but here, at last, were discovered quite a number of them close to a faintly hollowed track through the heather. At the point where the hilly country, from its upmost reaches, begins to descend rapidly towards the Dale, eight or nine may be seen, and there are probably others still waiting

discovery. From the ground where they lie, one can see the summits of two of the Eildons, and the hazier outline of more distant Border hills. On the north side of the Dale stretches the low undulating range of the Lammermoors with their wealth of prehistoric forts, and there is another system reaching for miles along the edge of the high ground where the tumuli are. To these low graves in the heather I sometimes bring my Ossian to read. They are a striking commentary on many of its old-world passages, and the book in its turn casts a clearer light on them. Read among the graves, on the quiet moor, one becomes conscious of strong internal evidence to its great age. Those who dispute the authenticity of Ossian have never heard the whisper of the breeze near such scenes as these. The poems are written by one who saw what he put into such simple but sublime language; they are really tales of the times of old. "Grey stones and heaped-up earth shall mark me to future times. When the hunter shall sit by the mound and produce his food at noon, 'Some warrior rests here,' he will say, 'and my fame will live in his praise.'" The human touch in the words bridges the present and the past. Amid all the bloodshed of their time, the hearts of the old warriors could beat with high and heroic emotions. "But if their swords are stretched over the feeble; if the blood of the weak has stained their arms; the bard shall forget them in the song,

and their tombs shall not be known. The stranger shall come and build there, and remove the heaped-up earth." Little danger now of homes of men ever disturbing the place where they lie, but one of the graves, apart by itself, has been opened, and the heart cannot help wondering if the warrior whose dust it covered ever forgot the warning words.

An evening towards the close of August, when the wind blew chill over the heather, I climbed the hill to visit them. The moor was purple with heather bloom, and delicate blue harebells waved above it, but colour was fading fast in the gathering dusk. A moorcock rose calling from among the graves, and the bleat of some sheep came over the hill. The wind which stirred the heather sang in the telegraph-wire by the road. From the north and west horizons large, white, stormy-looking clouds rose rapidly and hurried across a cold sky. Wisps of vapour took the form of men and beasts, advancing and breaking over the mounded graves. The breeze which whistled more chilly brought into the mind the words of the bard: "There they pursued boars of mist along the skirts of wind." A growing sense of unseen life oppressed the spirit. Indefinite forms appeared to gather on the hill. The shadow deepened on every side; grey night grew dark in the Dale. It is not good to reach too far back into other years, and raise the ghosts of their dead.

ON THEIR SOUTHWARD FLIGHT.

WITHIN the last few years a new light has been cast on the great annual bird-movements. The work of one well-known ornithologist, from weeks spent on lonely islets and in their lighthouses, has produced two volumes which read like a fairy tale. He has enriched the bird-life of the country by the discovery of species that the most ardent bird-lover could hardly have dreamt of,—species whose summer haunts are as far apart as those of the American pipit and the red-rumped swallow. Others, like the Subalpine, Savi's and the barred warblers, occurring once or twice or at most but a very few times over long periods, have been found at outlying and desolate points of our northern coasts almost every summer. Another, a distinguished teacher of science, by means of a simple system of ringing, has discovered many other interesting facts in regard to the wanderings of birds. Through the efforts of these and others the problem of migration is being put in a new light. There are many difficulties still, many problems that may never quite be understood, but at least we have

got larger and more definite thoughts of several aspects of one of the most mysterious studies of wild life.

In almost every country of Europe there has been a deepened and more enlightened interest taken in the subject of bird-migration and of the great routes that the feathered travellers follow. Among ourselves the British Ornithologists' Club has done more than any body of men to gather facts and create a more intelligent interest in these things. The lighthouses have been their best allies in the work; to them is due the increased knowledge which we have of the vast armies of birds that set out on their southward journey under cover of night. It is some return for the terrible destruction these warning beacons of the sailor have caused among the winged tribes that, without our lighthouses, we should have been left in ignorance of much that the lavish slaughter on the glass of the lantern, whose strong beams lure them to their doom, has revealed. One fact brought better home to the bird-lover is the shortness of the stay which so many of the birds of summer make with us. Less than three months after their arrival there are incipient signs of restlessness among them. As early as July many of them have begun to leave their summer quarters and are reported as having been seen at the lighthouses. One of the most familiar birds of our country homesteads—the barn swallow—is among the first to leave us. Most of the swallow tribe

continue with us for months later, but some have left for the south as early as the third week of July.

The first movement on the part of the warblers takes place from hedgerow and woodland thicket to the shrubberies about houses. From these they come stealing into the gardens at fruit time to share in the feast of good things—blackcap, garden-warbler, whitethroat, and an occasional wood-wren. That bright-coloured bird, the redstart, may be seen on lawn or wall, hopping actively in pursuit of an insect, or stopping for a little to vibrate the red feathers of his gaudy tail. In the woods hardly a bird is visible where, a few weeks ago, they filled every coppice with song; but there is a very appreciable increase in the neighbourhood of houses with gardens and shrubberies. Throughout August the most abundant of them, the dainty willow-warbler, has burst afresh into song, for most part weak and low, but sometimes reaching the height and ecstasy of earlier summer. If the windows be left open, willow-wrens—generally young birds—just before they depart, frequently find their way into the quieter rooms of houses in search of insects

The first intimation that swallows are on the move comes from the flights that may be seen along telegraph-wires and on roofs. Those who observe them will notice a large proportion of young birds among the flocking swallows. They are easily distinguished both on the wing and when they are perching; the young have not attained the grace and

speed of flight with which the older ones delight us, and their hues are much dingier. Large flocks rest and sun themselves on the roof, leaving it at intervals to take a short flight and then return. One purpose of such flights appears to be for the exercising of the young in the use of their wings. Now may be observed a very pretty habit of swallows—both barn swallow and martin—as they feed their young in the air. The two meet for a moment while the old bird transfers the food to the other's bill, then both sink for a little before recovering their line of flight. Young swallows chase the parent birds, urgent to be fed, and this practice must also rapidly strengthen their powers of wing. Now, too, both martin and swallow can be seen alighting on tall trees, but the latter much more frequently. Cold winds send them to hunt for insects along the lee-side of woods and hedges where they may be watched in hundreds, often in a very confined space. A field where cattle and sheep are feeding is another frequent place of resort for the flocking birds: the motions of the grazing animals disturb the insects, and swallows catch them as they rise into the air. In this part of the country we have neither osier- nor reed-beds by lake or sluggish river for the birds to resort to at night. In the absence of these great numbers use the corn-fields before the grain has been cut. There are particular fields, in places where they are less likely to be disturbed, which they seek towards the gloam-

ing. Over these they play in large numbers, rising and falling and circling, then disappearing to roost so suddenly that very few observe where they go. In one cornfield I have seen thousands of barn swallows settling into the depths of the standing grain with a loud twittering which ceased only with the approach of night.

As the year declines flight after flight arrive on their way from the north. One day the birds appear to be all barn swallows, the next most of them martins. At intervals the air seems full of them hurrying southward along the Dale as along a great bird-thoroughfare. A night of early frost or a favourable wind sends large contingents away. The old birds would probably leave different parts of the country, almost *en masse*, were it not for their young. Swallow fledgelings take much longer to reach full feather than those of others. Week after week the brood of the martin can be seen pushing their heads out of the nests under the eaves at every visit of the parent. This protracted stay in the nest is necessary for birds which spend practically all their time on the wing. If anything untoward happen to an earlier nest—through rain-storm or other accident—the desire to continue their kind, implanted by Nature in every creature, makes some linger much longer than the rest to rear a fresh brood. In most years the swifts have left us about the middle of August, but this past one a pair of birds were still feeding their young under the

eaves of a country schoolhouse in the first week of September.

No one who pays any heed to such things can well help noticing swallows so long as they remain with us. By day they are always in the open air. Not so with the warblers : hidden away for most part in the thickest foliage, it is difficult to time their definite departure. A growing diminution in their numbers can best be noticed by those to whose gardens they resort. Before the close of August a very large decrease has taken place. Tree-pipit and redstart have gone by the first week of September. Gone, too, are the whinchat from the glen and the white-throat from the hedgerow. Blackcaps are very fond of ripe elderberries, and one or two stay to see the last of these, feeding on them as greedily as they did earlier on the garden fruits. Lingering garden-warblers continue until the middle of September. There are days without a sign of them, and they all appear to have left, when a week, it may be, after the others have disappeared, one or two fresh birds are seen. Their secretive habits as well as their leafy haunts increase the difficulty of finding out when the last one has really gone. The spotted flycatcher is more a bird of the open like the swallow, and its movements are in consequence more obtrusive. A week or two after all the rest of these birds had disappeared, two others were seen on the house-top on a sunny day, catching flies and uttering their familiar note. Next day, the 21st of September,

there was only one flycatcher, and the day following it, too, had disappeared.

One year on the moorland I came upon a solitary wheatear well into October. Ring-ouzels sometimes linger in the hill-glens or join the missel-thrush in large flocks to feed on rowans, until late in that month. Both pied and grey wagtails come to the neighbourhood of houses as the season proceeds, to catch insects on the lawns and in parks where cattle feed. The pied birds stay for a lengthened time, their chissicking note being heard after the last swallow has gone. Some of them continue as late as November, regulating their movements according to the mildness or severity of the weather. Though meadow-pipits again flock for departure as early as August, stray individuals often stay by marsh and watercourse as late as the pied wagtail. Here, among the hills, every bird appeared to migrate; not a pipit was seen for years in winter. Yet it is never safe to dogmatise from such facts, for in January of the present year, amid cold and frost, a pipit rose with its shrill pip, pip from the heather on one of the upper moors.

Others may come and go, but the swallow is the bird of summer. On his wing he brings it from sunny climes, and with the disappearance of the last one winter comes sensibly nearer. Last year the latest barn swallows continued with us until the 26th of October. That was also the date of the arrival of the first fieldfare. The other birds of the

north came earlier; already the first flocks of red-wings, after staying for a few days, had passed farther inland. The brambling had also returned to feed among the beech-mast. Golden-crested wrens grew more abundant in the spruces about the house, and woodcock rose frequently in the coverts—mostly birds from over the sea. Crossbills were also seen, and flocks of redpolls came to the birch seeds before the swallows departed.

Cobwebs covered the fields, glistening in the dews of October mornings. Red admirals visited the open flowers in the heat of the day, but frosty nights swept away hosts of insect life. Wasps succumbed to the increasing chills, and the last of the blue-bottle flies gathered to sun themselves on warm walls. A flock of wild geese flew southward over the hills. White storm-clouds rose in mountainous piles above the eastern horizon, harbingers of future storms. Still the swallows lingered. The last of them waited to see the great Artist colouring the leaves. The woods decayed in a blaze of glory, burning themselves away. Their autumn tints are the swan-song of the year, sweet, pathetic, and some of the swallows stayed to hear it with the song of the redbreast out of the heart of the flaming trees. The mists that gathered and thickened over the woods seemed the smoke of the fallen and smouldering leaves.

Up to the very last the male swallow sang on an outhouse, or twittered in the air above it. For a

day or two some birds stayed though the hills were white with snow. In a sheltered glen they sought their daily-diminishing food-supplies, and as soon as the young were ready for the long journey all disappeared. The migratory impulse carried the last of them away; they stayed until it could be resisted no longer; there was a magnetism drawing them southward. The heart felt it, and grew restless with the departing swallows, seeking to escape from the winter as one does from the approach of a trouble. The air has grown strangely empty now that they are gone. The same feelings rise over their departure as when friends who have made a long stay leave us. The house appears silent and desolate without them, so did the heavens without the swallows. We may have sunny days yet and blue depths between white clouds, but the spirit of the sunshine has gone with the birds of summer.

NOVEMBER BY THE RIVER.

IT is pleasant to follow the bank of the river and listen to its song—clear, cold, and loud—on a November day. Unless for the sad, sweet melody of a redbreast, there seems no note but that of the singing stream. Nature's other sounds are fitful and intermittent. The wind rises and falls, from storm the restless sea sinks into calm, the song of birds passes with its season, but the flowing river is never silent. Day and night, summer and winter, from generation to generation, its ripple and splash rise unceasingly. It may change its tone, but the steady murmur persists through all change; there is an element of the eternal in it. We can hear it better now that most of the birds are mute, and the high plants and grasses have fallen with the myriad leaves which once deadened its steady note. There is a depth in the river's song which even the voice of the living bird lacks. It sings to you out of the deepest places of life, and the heart reads into the ever-changing yet never-ceasing sound its own manifold feelings and thoughts. It is sweet to follow the song of the river in the

dead season of the year, musing by it, and anon letting it muse to oneself. A wonderful compass there is in the sound, clear and bell-like in places, murmuring deeply in the rapids at the head of some pool, whispering again like a voice in sleep, prattling here as merry and light-hearted as a child, moaning and complaining there as if under the burden of age. It finds a voice for experiences of life which cannot impart themselves in common speech, filling the pauses that have no place in human tongues, comforting, soothing, and lifting up the thoughts, and so it is always pleasant to follow the song of the river.

The vale on either side of it lies in shadow, but bright flecks of sunshine rest on the hills. Then the clouds, wind-driven, pass from the face of the sun, and the whole valley glows in a soft radiance. Shadows cast by tree and bush and hedgerow are clearly outlined on the ground by this sudden burst of light. September is the month of clearly defined shadows. There appears to be something in the light and the crystal atmosphere that gives depth and definition to them then. The shadows of September are like those which things cast just before sunset at the close of a bright summer day. With the hazy, slumberous light of the succeeding month they grow more vague and spiritual, but in November they recover some of their old depth and detail. In those days of sunshine which succeed November gales—clear, bracing, and almost balmy days—this

is more noticeable. The shadows have an interest and a character of their own in the gleaming landscape, only they no longer outline deep masses of foliage but a maze of trunk, leafless branch and twig, making ever-changing patterns of interlacing lines upon the ground.

The light falls on the tiled roof of an old mill close to the river, making its warm brown tints show through the lichen growths and weather stains which almost hide them. No longer can you hear the clack, clack of the busy wheel nor the cheery voice of the miller. Many are the days since the last sheaf was brought from the neighbouring fields. Other houses stand beside it, but they are all deserted. Neither man nor beast appear anywhere near them; they look lonely and desolate alongside the brown-tiled silent mill. The channel of the mill-stream may be traced among the rushes. Water always follows it, and at one place has been made to form a washing-pool, with sheep-buchts close to it. Moorhens slip in and out among the rushes where they nest in early summer. The outline of the garden is visible still, the traces of its enclosing wall which has long fallen, and a row of hawthorns that fill the summer evening with the fragrance of abundant blossom. A solitary spruce-tree stands by one corner. Over an embankment mint and mimulus have wandered down towards the stream. All these things bring back the people of the mill, as some faded print or a treasured

relic that unlocks for the heart the doors of the past.

The river and two of its affluents supplied the water-power that made twelve mills work in the course of as many miles. Some of them had existed from time immemorial. To each its own part of the country was thirled or assigned; here the husbandmen had to bring their harvest to be ground, and the miller was always sure of his share. The rights and claims of the old mills were a fertile source of disputes. But now the farmer sends his grain some distance to be sold, and meal is brought from other places. The local mill belonged to a different order of things, when crofters and other small holders tilled the land. Then each family lived largely on the produce of its own fields, and wheaten bread was unknown. With altered conditions of life and commerce there remains no place for the country mill. At best it leads but a struggling existence; without some land of his own the miller would starve. The coming of the large farm gave the first heavy blow to the local mill. Against imported wheat and two hard facts, the growing tendency to sell in the dearest and buy in the cheapest market, the miller could not hold up his head. Nowadays the people of the smallest community get their bread from the ends of the earth. Crofts and small holdings have practically disappeared over wide districts, and the country mill has had to follow them. Nothing but the name

remains of some of those by the river; on the outside wall of others the great water-wheel is crumbling slowly to pieces; only one or two contrive to carry on a lingering, half-active existence. The silent mill with its warm brown roof and the deserted houses belong to almost forgotten conditions of social and industrial life.

Fields of root-crops show as patches of greenery in the open, but everywhere else is light yellow of stubble or withered grass, brown of newly-turned soil, or faded bronze of bracken on the hillside. Amid the general leaflessness of the woods deep lustreless greens of fir and spruce assert themselves; to the larches alone of deciduous trees the lingering needles give a dingy orange tint. This autumn the hawthorn bushes have been laden with haws. In the sunshine the branches are a perfect picture with their loads of crimson fruit,—not for many years have the birds had such a banquet. If the popular belief have any foundation in fact, we ought to have a very severe winter. By an old lane within easy walk of the river, fieldfare, redwing, blackbird, and missel-thrush were feasting in hedges that have been allowed to grow so long unpruned that they almost meet over the path. From the public road which passes one end of it to the railway at the other there might be a quarter of a mile within sound of trap and motor or train, and yet the place is as wild and retired as if it were far from

human life. Here in summer there is a profusion of wild roses. Along the quiet lane their briars lift up long prickly stems to make the greenery gay with the pink and white of many flowers and hang drooping sprays of roses. In the November sunshine scarlet hips glow beneath masses of crimson haws. There might have been hundreds of fieldfares along this road; numbers of them were flying between the trees and pools of standing-water in the cart ruts. A handsome thrush with beautiful markings is the fieldfare, and easily distinguished from the smaller and more ruddy redwing, which crosses the sea a full fortnight earlier in autumn. Country people call both of them Norwegian thrushes. The earliest flocks stayed for a day in the Dale, then passed farther inland, but now they are everywhere, their numbers increased day by day by fresh arrivals from the sea. Some weeks ago they both came—redwing and fieldfare—before the last barn swallow had departed. Norwegian thrushes, blackbird, common and missel thrush, all were at work in the high hedges, greedily devouring the haws. There was no thought for the morrow in their hearts; under the bushes among the fallen leaves scattered berries lay in every direction. The birds grow much wilder as winter advances, but to-day they let one quite near before flying up the hedge with a protesting chuff! chuff! Redwings gave a shrill tseep, and the missel-thrush sounded his harsh rattle. But

a few minutes after the intruder had passed they were as busy as ever, storing up food as man stores fuel against the cold of winter.

It is the season of wild fruits, and with the fall of the leaf they show at their best. In their abundance they make the nakedness of bough and twig less visible, and help to redeem the colourlessness of the season. Large juicy sloes are beautiful with the rich blue-grey bloom of early winter. They always bring back old days of schoolboy memories, and a hanging birch-wood with thickets of blackthorn along the edge of the fields above it. On some naked, prickly branches they crowd almost as thickly as haws. For years the bushes bear little if any fruit, and then in one like this they are heavily laden. Very pleasant they are to the eye, however bitter they may be to the taste. Sometimes they are used to give a wilder, tarter flavour to preserves.

With wide, easy sweep of wing a heron rises from a pool where he has been patiently fishing. A dipper flies down the stream, and another is singing sweetly, perched on a low post in the river-bed, a bright, cheery song which blends with the murmur of the flowing water. Stand and listen to his happy, careless, rollicking melody, and you will never believe the groundless but too common aspersion of his vocal powers by people who say he cannot sing. He appears absorbed in it, and when at last he leaves his perch, it is but

to alight on a stone farther down and sing again. Winking and rolling his dark, glistening eyes, in a way that makes him look pert and old-world, the heart of the dipper seems always light and free from care. Should you come back when the river is almost frozen into silence, you will hear him singing, singing, even as he swims in the icy pool. The redbreast himself appears to have forgotten his plaintive song, but on the river rolling darkly between its cold, snow-covered banks, the dipper is as jubilant as in the spring-time.

Against a brown field on the upland, snowy-breasted gulls drift while the dipper sings. Under lee of the bushes and over the water clouds of gnats dance, glad to steal from gloomy winter a day of sunshine in which to live their short lives. Not at them but at some other insects floating down the stream, trout are rising in the quiet water near the foot of the pool. On a marshy holm by the river are a large flock of golden plover. They have lost the rich glossy black of the breast and all the bright sheen of their nesting plumage. Among the faded grasses they appear plain, sober-coloured birds; but presently the flock rise into the air calling pu! pu! in their flight, and as they double and fly with wonderful grace, glints of gold reveal themselves to the sunshine.

There is no end to the possibilities of Nature; out of her treasures she is always producing

things old and new. I watched the telegraph-wires to-day on the chance of seeing a great grey shrike, and the leafless hawthorns for a possible if rarer waxwing. Apart from any strong probability of success, the action added zest to the walk. In this way does the fisherman patiently cast his flies over the water hour by hour, the possibility kept alive by that touch of imagination which constantly urges him on. The water may break suddenly just where he is casting, and, with a strain on his rod, the sense of expectancy pass into a sudden thrill of delight. Even in expectancy itself there is pleasure, a real pleasure that keeps life alert and active, acting upon it as currents upon the waters of the sea. Then when you are looking for one thing, another, if not the object of your quest, is almost sure to come to you. Any interest in Nature, diligently pursued, puts you in the way of others. The great matter is that one should cultivate the attitude of the open eye and the receptive heart. Thus though neither shrike nor waxwing were seen, the search was not in vain. Two other birds showed themselves unexpectedly, that had been sought for a long time without success. One was the comparatively rare marsh tit—rare here, at least, as in many parts of the Border country. It came to a tree by the path-side in a fir-wood near the river. The harsh tsay! tsay! drew the thoughts to it some time before it was seen. Then a cole-tit approached

it, and the difference between the two was at once apparent. Within a few minutes another bird seldom met with in the neighbourhood, the cross-bill, passed overhead calling. So the open eye, whether it find what it seeks or not, is always falling on something interesting.

Large, gleaming, white-ringed pheasants strayed among the russet and green of the fern under the fir-trees. Glints of sunshine found their way through the sombre green above, falling on the ruddy trunks and breaking up the dark depths of the wood. Through them the birds wandered, the white on their glistening necks, in the distance, like a bar of light. Proud, stately, and beautiful, the wood might be their own for an indefinite length of days, and yet another week will see them falling in hundreds amid the clamour of men and the murderous noise of guns. The heart cannot help a pang of sorrow at the sight of the birds in their glancing plumage, all unconscious of approaching fate: perhaps the regret is more real for the fact that there is so much akin to their lot in human life. Better for us as for them not to know the shadow that to-morrow holds. Let me forget it even if I might fear it, and give myself untroubled to the joy and content of to-day.

THE OPENING OF THE PASSION- FLOWER.

THE house stands almost six hundred feet above sea-level. It fronts the south, and is well sheltered by trees; but the experiment was a very doubtful one to try with a delicate plant that had always lived in a greenhouse. There, in any case, the passion-flower had never put forth a single bloom. Each year it showed abundant signs of vitality in the growth of a number of stems and the dense freshness of the leaves, otherwise it was merely cumbering space, with no trace of even an incipient bud to give better promise for coming days. Other plants, it may have been, elbowed the passion-flower too closely, and among their bright blossoms it was reluctant to reveal charms that might have produced jealous rivalry without ensuring the queenliest place. On one side ivy-leaved geranium clad the wall with scarlet petals, on another a large African lily (*Agapanthus*) pressed against the passion-flower stems.

This past summer the veiled floral beauty still refused to disclose its face. As a final resource it

was removed, and planted with as much care as possible on the house wall. The wave of the year's life had almost reached its highest point. On the lawn rose-beds were breaking into masses of fragrant colour. There was no lack of bird-melody in the early morning, though during the day it had almost ceased. The garden-warbler sang its sweet song, keeping well in the shade, and chacked strongly and querulously at intervals, for its nest with young was in a rhododendron bush close to the summer-house. From a clump of trees in the park a stock-dove cooed most of the day with tender affection to his mate brooding in the ivy-clad aspen. The note had a pleasant cadence for the ear; it was softer and less abrupt than that of the ring-dove, more like the coo of the house-pigeon, a continuous murmur of plaintive sounds. With the multitude of creatures that revelled in the year's life, the passion-flower responded at once to the sweet influence of the summer-time. Its stems lengthened rapidly; every day showed a perceptible difference. With a strange semblance to conscious life, they sent out long twining tendrils to seize the bare branches of a dead wall-rose and the cross wires of some trellis-work, until they reached higher than every support, and began to hang down. So far as increased growth of stem and more marked signs of healthy vitality, the experiment of removal was amply justified.

An araucaria grows on the lawn between the rose-beds and a number of plots that extend ray-like from

a circular space, with a border of turf between each. Here, as the summer advanced, the bedded-out plants gave more variety of brilliant hue, though they wanted the grace and dignity of the rose. Another plot, that followed the curve of some laurel bushes, showed their colours to even better advantage against the deep-green, glossy leaves. Overreaching branches produced in this place a ranker growth of plant, without making as much shadow as injured the colouring. Drawn upwards, they flowered profusely—many-coloured phlox, verbena, nemesia, dianthus, salpiglossis, scabious, among other finer flowers. In the summer twilight, behind these, a row of white and pink tobacco-plants, tall and graceful, stood out against the deeper background of laurel leaf, and filled the dewy air with delicate perfume. It floated over the paths and through the trees, like a cloud of incense stealing through the shadowy spaces of a large church.

The last faint echoes of song died away amid days of scorching heat. A greenfinch sometimes breezed slowly and monotonously, as if he had no heart to sing. But the heat, which made work a weariness and hushed the sweeter songs of the year, put new life and vigour into the passion-flower. Its stems went on increasing, and minute flower-buds began to show at the base of the leaves. They looked small, however, in their green sheaths, and the season was rapidly advancing. Would they be able to open before the colder weather came? The

question dashed the pleasure of anticipation which their appearance brought. Day by day the interest deepened, and clothed the plant with a humanity of its own. The passion-flower was struggling upwards to the dream of its existence, the fulfilment of the divine idea wrapped up in it, and the heart felt a new gladness at every sensible approach.

By-and-by the last brood of barn swallows left their nest in the rafters of the wood-shed. One Sunday morning they were gliding among some cattle in the field. A buttercup here and there remained; but they looked naked and disconsolate in the fading and trampled pasture, as if they remembered wistfully the luscious greenery of June. These were all that remained of the great host that had gleamed so late in the golden armour of the sun. From a sheltered seat placed where the wood abuts on the field I sat and watched the swallows. Passing and repassing, they paused constantly in their flight to seize an insect with a sharp, loud snip, or rose to feed their young, meeting them, bill to bill, in the air. The old ones could always be distinguished by their more rapid and perfect flight. On the roof the first flocks of martins gathered before departing, and numbers of warblers came to the garden—flycatchers, willow-wrens, garden-warblers, whitethroats, redstarts, and at least one blackcap.

Yellow tints crept into some of the trees—first into the laburnum and then into the elm. The earliest ones were like the grey hairs that a mirror suddenly

discovers. Gradually they spread until the eye, looking up through the trees, saw yellowing leaves everywhere. Sparrows came to the ripe fields of corn outside the gates, and a sparrow-hawk followed them to claim his tithe. The second burst of song, poor in comparison with the first, was approaching its best. The redbreast sang sadly of passing sunshine and the gloom of coming winter. His notes were an appeal to the charity and kindlier feelings of man. In the midst of the song the passion-flower suddenly opened. Its buds had been silently swelling and lengthening through the weeks. On one day of bright sunshine two burst forth together, blue-tinted, beautiful. They glorified the whole plant, stem and leaf, as a great soul glorifies those connected with it by expressing all that is best in them. These flowers were the first-fruits of the plant, and the hands could not reach up to pluck either of them; it was sufficient to look again and again, to try to realise their marvellous beauty. A bright-coloured admiral butterfly lit on a Gloire rose near them. The beauty of the plant and the beauty of the insect were alike indescribable.

Red admirals and smaller tortoiseshell butterflies both came to the single dahlias and other garden plants. The latter, lovely when alone, looked dingy and commonplace beside their lovelier companions. One red admiral on a stem of pale-blue larkspur made a perfect contrast and yet a perfect harmony of rich colouring: beauty, like truth, is the embrac-

ing and reconciling of contrasts. The mildness of the later season brought out many blossoms of crimson japonica; flower and apple-like fruit grew on the same branch. In pots on the top of the front embankment the burning bush glowed and flamed with tints that grew more and more heavenly until they slowly burned themselves away. The passion-flowers were more fleeting; they lasted little more than a day, then closed their petals, like a beautiful face that veils its charms almost as soon as they are seen. Whenever the sky got heavy they withdrew within the sheathed covering, and resembled the unopened buds again, only they soon turned yellow and faded away.

The rookery in the elm-trees resounded with the cawing of returning birds; some of them even began to break off sticks as if they meant to repair their nests. Fieldfares and redwings had come again, and the harsh note of the brambling was heard from the beeches. Dark, starry nights brought more owls nearer to the house, and they commenced hooting soon after sunset, two at times in different keys. One roosted in the grounds by day as well, among the ivy that wreathed some of the tree-trunks, or high up in the dense crown of leaves. Blackbirds and chaffinches took a delight in tormenting him with loud chinking notes; once they called attention to the bird of night in a lime-tree that shadowed the lawn. From a bare branch he turned his head from side to side, and blinked at every one who passed

with his large, round, sleepy eyes. More passion-flowers were hastening to forestall the approach of winter, and fresh buds forming. It was easier now to pluck a flower for closer observation. New wonders were revealed as the eye gazed into it. The three pistils hung down their heads to be dusted by the pollen of the stamens beneath. The arrangement explained how the flower opened and passed so soon. It was self-sufficient for all the purposes of its own life, only it gave in beauty where it did not need to get, and so fulfilled the highest purpose of being. The stamens themselves were full of interest as they hung suspended from each filament, so as to vibrate and swing with the slightest motion of the hand. Through a magnifying-glass the petals of the flower glistened and sparkled like small spicules of snow in bright moonlight. One could understand all the symbolism which hallowed it and earned for the plant its name. There was the cross, formed by the three styles and the part that supported them. The circle of bare filaments rising from the corolla formed the crown of thorns. All these were enshrined in a halo of living beauty; they gave an interest to the flower, and appeared to fade and disappear before the gaze in the loveliness of the general design.

Week by week, gradually climbing to their hill of transfiguration that they might unfold their divine beauty, the flowers opened to the autumn sunshine. With the day they came, and with the day most

of them closed. They were as transient as all supremely beautiful things. Wild creatures visited the grounds more often than had been shyer before. Pheasants gathered for sanctuary from the first cover-shoot of the season. The gleaming bronze tints of the male birds struck a note of happy concord with the brown and russet leaves. One morning a covey of fourteen partridges, plump and rounded, quietly searched for food not many yards from the front door. A large chestnut-tinted hare rose in the wood from a bed of leaves where he was perfectly invisible beside the path, and with difficulty made his way through a gap in the wire-netting into the field. The beeches burned with fiery crowns; on the elms the green and gold of earlier autumn changed to one gleaming mass of vivid yellow; the tresses of the birch-trees became dingy orange, and in their scanty appearance resembled the locks of age.

A hard November frost hastened the fall of the leaf. It was useless ere this to sweep the footpaths: every day brought its own shower of falling leaves. At last a strong white frost, after an ideal day for the time of the year, practically brought them all down. They had rustled among the branches through the hours of night and early morning, but it was with the rise of the sun into the sky that the fall appeared to reach its height. The sight was one to be remembered; the rustling leaves suggested a snow-storm. Some came straight down to the earth, others

swayed and doubled, or rotated as they fell. When a tree was shaken, a blinding shower followed. Round the park, in the wood, along the avenue, was this never-ceasing descent of leaves. Every place near the trees was bedded deep with spotted sycamore, yellow elm, and russet beech—flower-beds, paths, and lawn. From horse-chestnut, lime-tree, and birch came the same unending fall. It produced a feeling of wonder at the multitude of leafage that had clothed each tree. The palmate leaves of the chestnut lay flat on the ground, like pleading hands that had been cut off by some remorseless foe. Evergreens were covered with the clinging leaves, and the yew-trees in the grass roofed with their varied tints. Before night the ash-trees were perfectly stripped. There was something touching in it all, the falling leaf brought the end of the year so vividly home to the thoughts. But all sadness was lost in the bright sunshine and blue sky. The season was closing amid a burst of sweet song.

A passion-flower struggled to open to the unclouded sun. A single petal was unfolded, but it had not sufficient energy to get the others into the light. The flower had made a brave start; perhaps it would reach its fuller purpose another day. Monthly roses still bloomed. One or two flowers looked through a window at the cheery blaze within, and when cold winds blew down from leaden skies made the heart repeat the words of the well-known song.

It was a wonderful November: the garden had a

record quantity of bloom, and by the middle of the month snowdrop and daffodil had sent through the earth their green pointed spears, heralds of another spring. But as the days went past they were dashed more frequently with chill and blustering gales. The gardener protected the passion-flower with branches and a covering of matting against the frosts of more inclement weather. Even yet, above the protected part, other flowers sought to open. There was something human about the intensity with which they struggled to express themselves. It was all in vain : with the failing of the light and the shortening day most of them turned yellowish-green and rapidly decayed. Only one here and there through an apparently fuller vitality struggled longer, but they, too, had to give up in the end their useless efforts. These abortive ones excited a feeling of deep compassion : the flowers that had failed in the apparent purpose and aim of their existence were a parable of so much in human life.

LOVE IN A GARDEN.

THE house had been empty for almost half a year, and there was no one to care for the garden. A first glimpse of it—overgrown with weeds and deep in sodden leaves—revealed the disastrous effects of long neglect. Some of the ungathered apples hung from the leafless trees; the rest lay rotting on the damp ground. Bushes were falling from the wall for want of pruning and tending, great unkempt masses of herbaceous plants leaned over the walks. The gravelled paths themselves were green with short seeding grasses. Yet all these defacing circumstances could not hide the imprint of the care and loving attention which generations had bestowed upon it, before this season of neglect. The heart traced it beneath the dead, weed-choked remnants of last summer's wealth of flowers. A few had survived rainstorm and chilly blast, many of them old-fashioned, rich in tender human associations, blossoms enshrined for ages in poesy and in song. These and other things gave the garden a humanity which needed only the touch of new thoughts and fresh hands to make it revive

and open again as a flower opens to the sunshine. We had come in one way at the best season, when there is little difference between a garden and a wilderness, and decay itself looks natural. Coming then, we set to work at once to impress a new individuality upon it without destroying the old.

Life began and it ends in a garden: over large parts of it lingers the fragrance of one still. Every attempt at garden-making, be it only through a few stunted flowers on a city window-sill, is an effort to realise the ideal, the garden side of life. It is easier to think good thoughts and to entertain kindly feelings among flowers than anywhere. The garden unconsciously creates an atmosphere about the soul which is both elevating and purifying. None of the worst passions of life—groundless suspicion, blighting malice, cruel jealousy—can live long in the presence of the flowers. Their beauty and their innocence penetrate the finest pores of life, and reach its deepest places. Among them it is easy to feel at peace with all the world.

“One is nearer God’s heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.”

Taking the neglected garden in hand, we made what appeared to us improvements in one place and then in another. That was the best way to enter into perfect possession of it. The garden had not really seemed ours until we impressed upon it part of our own individuality. The old gardener returned

to take charge again, carrying out the plans we made, and supplementing them out of his own knowledge and experience. High-walled, tree-surrounded, it had two of the best qualities any garden can have—those of peace and security. Away from the noise and passing traffic of the public road, no prying eye could command it. In the dead season of the year, after months of neglect, notwithstanding first impressions, it gave promise of a perfect garniture of leaf, as well as a rich variety and wealth of flower.

Before the last flowers of the year had all passed away the leaf-spears of another spring were pushing through the ground, under shelter of evergreen and fallen leaf. Polyanthus began to bloom again. However low it might burn, the lamp of life never altogether went out in Flora's temple; unseen vestal hands always kept it aflame in some place, and the garden, through this uninterrupted continuity of growth, suggested immortality. A new year had hardly opened when the first snowdrop began to show the white of its flower through the green of the leaf-sheaths. From this firstling of the season and the aconite to the last Michaelmas daisy, what a rush and volume of blossom! With prismatic power the flowers broke up the white light of the sun into its most beautiful constituent colours, and added new and delicate hues of their own. Glorious as the sunshine is, one never realises all that it means until the eye has looked upon it through the flower-petals under the transmuting power of their

life. Through them the light revealed its perfect beauty. They were like sunset clouds disclosing tender and unspeakable glories which had been lost in the blaze of garish day.

A special feature of the garden had always been its herbaceous plants. These possessed a humanity of their own from the fact that so many of them had once come from other places, and represented friendly hearts and kindred spirits. Even when the giver was forgotten the aroma of such human associations still clung to them. Tedious were it to catalogue them ; and besides, the flower always means so much more than the name. They provided a floral wreath for the greater part of the year, into which Nature wove new blooms fast as the old ones decayed. Every morning, from spring till autumn, something new and fresh would appear; the eye constantly alighted on something unexpected. In the shrubberies and the wilderness—for they were all part of a larger garden—shrub and tree burgeoned into beauty in their own season.

What added to the interest was the number of creatures which shared the joy. Why do you encourage so many of them, has often been asked of me. You feed them in winter, and they feed themselves at your expense through most of the summer. It was quite true, though the thought had never struck me, and at times some of them did a great deal of injury. So the question, put abruptly, was difficult to answer. Yet in my own heart I could

not spare one of them ; each creature rejoicing in its own life somehow increased the joy and fulness of mine. Of course some of them had to go,—long-tailed field-mouse ruining the newly-sown rows of seed, and short-tailed voles. Even the old male hawfinch, father of a family of young birds reared in the garden, for his ravages among the pea-rows was put on a nominal proscription list. Young thrushes and blackbirds were often caught in the nets, where they perished miserably ; but that was unavoidable, and everyone found alive was tenderly released, often to the irretrievable damage of the net itself. Perfect security brought many birds ; it was easy to count more than forty species in and immediately about the garden. Almost all of these visited it at one time or another. Barn swallow and house martin twittered pleasantly as they glided over it, filling the air with the most perfect grace and rhythm of life and motion. They came and went, appearing and as suddenly disappearing, for the garden, among the trees which sheltered it on every side, might have been a flowery glade in some wood. On mild summer evenings the town swifts drew dark lines of rapid flight against the unclouded blue. Many warblers visited the garden during the fruit-season. There were always some kinds about the house, the shrubberies suited them so well for nesting, but the ripening fruit brought more from all around. Garden-warbler and black-cap might be seen every day, as long as there was

a single bunch of currants on the bushes trained against the walls. Voraciously devouring them, they stripped the juicy berries from their stems, and strewed the ground underneath with fallen currants. Wary of approach, they would fling themselves over the wall into the thick foliage, often to hide behind the cover of a single leaf, and chack and scold as if there were no doubt on which side the aggression lay. But so strong was their love of ripe fruit that, provided you stood quiet for a time, one after another slipped back, first into the standard apple-trees by the walks, and from these to the bushes on the wall. Whitethroats did comparatively little harm, and the dainty willow-warblers lived almost entirely on the abundant insect life. In their own way these were the humming-birds of the garden : sometimes they might be seen hovering in the air, with rapidly beating wings, and extracting insects from the long calyx of a high tobacco - flower. Redstarts visited it more rarely every season, but hardly a summer passed without a pair of spotted flycatchers nesting. For all the too-evident traces of destruction which they left behind them in tattered pea-pods, hawfinches were seldom seen more than once or twice in the time of leaf, but their plaintive notes and more vividly contrasted hues called attention every day to the bullfinches, as they rose from the bushes.

The roses of summer came and passed again. The year reached its fulness with them ; the

tenderest beauty, the grace and dignity of the months, were gathered into the rose. Dog-roses among the bushes by the park railing, as if they were happier for being close to the wild from which they came, hybrid perpetual and half-hardy tea in the beds, ramblers climbing all over the trellis-work by the lawns. A pale blush rambling rose was covered with sheets of flower which almost hid the leaves, the crimson had its blooms so bunched together as to appear but single large roses, Dorothy Perkins flowered in bright-pink bridal sprays. It was hard to assign the palm of beauty, each variety seemed most beautiful so long as it held the eye. They passed and came again, an afterglow of roses, with the soft sunshine of autumn. There was not the same wealth of flower, but the tints were better defined, and, if possible, more luscious than in earlier summer: perhaps the realised feeling of their evanescent loveliness, as the months drew nearer a close, helped to impress it more deeply. The later plants made the lawn-beds glow again with bright hues. Scarlet lobelia shone in the sunshine among them with the sparkle of wine. There are colours which stand out from others, and that of the lobelia was one of them. So does the deep blue of one or two gentians, the tint like the pale blue of the Mediterranean on a larkspur, and the bright scarlet of one of the lychnises. There may be others whose tints have a special fascination for

the eye, but these were the chief ones in the garden.

All that had been most gracious and tender in the earlier year was crowded into sunny, golden autumn days, as that of the flowers had been into the rose. The light was clearer and revealed colour better, and the shadow which it cast was more defined. But this lasted only for a short time. As autumn advanced, a haze rose morning by morning and filled the horizon, obscuring distant outlines. No breath of wind rose to carry it away, and often it was late afternoon before the sun could struggle through. The shadows under it lost all their sharpness; there was not enough of light to give them depth and detail. The haze thickened gradually to one great pall of vapour which hid all the sky. Grey days darkened over the garden, and when the light shone through them again, the flowers looked sadly the worse for drenching rains. Some of them rallied to make a brave show of colour, but their old stateliness had gone. They drooped and bent their heads, as man himself does under the stress and burden of years.

The rain-storm which robbed the garden of part of its beauty, through the mist and chill of the nights, coloured the leaves. Chestnuts shone over the avenue with the pale-yellow light of giant candelabra. On one side of the garden the yellowing elms resembled huge billowy cataracts

which appeared to be rolling over to engulf everything. The trees about the park displayed every tint of russet, yellow, orange, and chrome. Weeping-birches with their coloured tresses became fairy fountains of golden spray. A hard night's frost killed the dahlias. Fresh storms ruined a bank which had been resplendent with chrysanthemums. Some of the hardier plants struggled to keep their petals open to the unkindly skies; but the fallen leaves concealed the humbler flowers, as the redbreasts covered the babes in the wood.

Yet to-day a large bunch of rosebuds has been brought into the house to open in tepid water. It is the second week of November, and they excite tender feelings in the heart, carrying the thoughts through the gloom of the day to the glad sunshine of a past summer. Several monthly roses can be seen through the study window, and I know there are always Gloires on the bush trained up the wall. The cobæas have a few flowers still, though numbers of them have turned their heads to the wall to die, like the people of olden times. But a week ago the first storm-clouds rose above the horizon, turning orange and lurid-pink in the evening lights, and we have had our first snow. Soon the garden will be bedded deep in it, as a winding-sheet covers the dead. Faded are the flowers of summer. Let them go; they have lived their day; they have finished their work, and are entered into their rest. Sunshine

and happy memories have they left behind in the heart. Love tended and cared for them; love gathered them to garnish the home. Through the love of the heart within they grew lovelier still. The rose may be the queen of the flowers, but love is the queen of the roses. Storms may rise, tempests darken, but the flower of love abideth. In the day of distress and sore trial it shines out more beautifully, opening wider amid the gloom as other flowers do in the sunshine. They may fade and pass away, but love abideth, cheering hearth and home through winter as well as summer. Beautiful above words, with a beauty which can move the heart to tears, still they are flowers of earth: love is Heaven's great immortelle.

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